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ISSUE 237

APRIL 2011

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# common ground

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**Robert Bateman**  
children and nature

**Calcium**  
get the right balance

**Earth Day Update**

**Fetal  
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### Made My Varicose Go away

My name is Elizabeth, and I have many great things to say about the Pedo-socks! I started wearing the socks a few years ago. Although I am not diabetic, and I don't have circulation problems, I have always had issues with my feet simply being sore or 'tired'. I like walking at the park but my walks were usually limited to 30 minutes because my feet would give out on me. However, when I wear my Pedo-socks I can keep going easily over an hour! It is like the socks have increased the stamina of my feet, and they don't get sore anymore. I love the Pedo socks! Finally, I am no longer taking orders from my feet - they go where I want them to now. My sister Caroline has issues with circulation in her feet and varicose veins. Since she has been wearing the socks, her pain has reduced and her veins even look better.



I'm Caroline. My sister gave the Pedo-socks to me to try a few months ago because I have had trouble with the blood circulation in my feet and my legs since

I was 15. I was always embarrassed to go around barefoot or wear shorts because my veins looked so bad and my feet were tinted blue. Since I started wearing the socks, I know that my circulation has improved because the blue color is gone! It is amazing; my feet used to look like a Texas road map! I also believe that I have had a little reduction in the soreness of my ankles. In short, the Pedo-socks have done wonders for my feet! I have even started wearing them to bed at night!

- Elizabeth & Caroline Gosch, Texas

### Can't Work without Pedo-Socks

As a hospital nurse, I work 12 hour shifts. Prior to purchasing Eleotin® Pedo-Protection socks, my feet and legs were sore and burning by the end of the shift, and I had begun to develop a small varicose vein in my right leg.



This was particularly upsetting, as I had gone through eight pregnancies without any varicose veins, only a few spider veins. Once I started wearing Pedo-socks, my feet and legs felt fine throughout the long shifts and the veins did not get any worse. These are the only stockings I will wear to work. In case of mishaps, I carry a spare pair of Pedo-socks. One day I loaned my spare of Pedo-socks to a colleague. She loved them. She had experienced swelling and pain in her legs and ankles for years, but with these stockings the swelling does not get worse during the long shifts. She says whenever she wears Eleotin® socks she has a great day at work!

- Rita Chad, Registered Nurse

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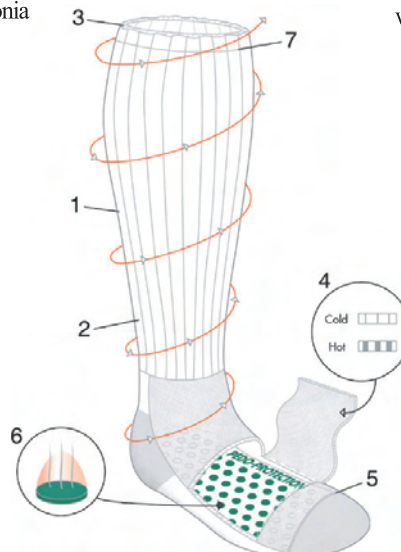
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I am a twice Olympian who still trains and competes later in life. Lately, someone gave me a pair of a new revolutionary-type sock that is supposed to help peripheral circulation and stimulate reflex points in the foot, with a total improvement in the physiology of lower leg and overall "less tired" feeling of some 25%. I tried them out on my usual interval training bush hill climb. This has steep pitches interspersed with flatter areas ideal for training in most sports. The problem is that it starts fairly steep and the first anaerobic (movement without oxygen) minute or so and beyond is painful with lactic acid build-up before the aerobic cycle kicks in, and lactic acid is removed.

To my surprise, the lactic acid phase was cut in half to make my legs less painful and my legs felt particularly good for the whole session. I did this again in the next day, with even better result. Now I wear them about everywhere, and get less leg-tiredness and a nice 'relaxed feeling' in them. I think they would improve performance, just that extra edge, in most sports.

- Dr. Michael Sichel, DO, ND, PhD





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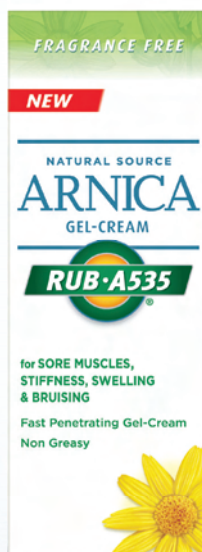
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# Children & nature



Robert Bateman with "Heritage - Bald Eagle." Photo by Birgit Freybe Bateman.

On October 13, 2008, a 15-year-old boy named Brandon Crisp walked out of his house because his parents had taken away his Xbox video game; after a three-week search, his body was finally found. The November 19, 2008, issue of the *New York Times* described the huge increase of medications that are prescribed to young people. Parks and natural areas that once rang with the shouts of children are now devoid of kids. Change has been happening to society and it does not look good for our future.

From the beginning of time, we have been connected to nature. We, of course, are literally nature's children, but, for the first time in history, that connection threatens to be broken by the majority of an entire generation and perhaps generations to come. When I read Richard Louv's landmark book, I was surprised at how insidious and widespread the problem had become. I guess I was living in a bubble. My family and friends were out in nature all the time. I was shocked to learn that perhaps the majority of mothers were afraid to let their children outside to play.

Since reading the book, I have been including issues in Louv's book in my lectures. The feedback is always one way. Most children are not playing by themselves out in nature. Almost all outside activity is adult supervised. Soccer moms are a relatively recent phenomenon but adult supervision seems to be essential nowadays. One person described these diamond-shaped yellow road signs which say, "Slow – children playing" as being out of date. They should say, "No children playing." Richard Louv's book, *Last Child in the Woods*, cites recent research at Harvard and numerous US, Canadian, British and European institutions. The findings are if children play in nature (I don't mean organized soccer or cement playgrounds), climb trees, build forts and dams in creeks and go exploring, here is what happens: they have less obesity, less attention deficit disorder, less depression, less suicide, less alcohol and drug abuse and less bullying and higher marks. If one were to make a list of the main problems facing that age group and indeed any age group, it would be the same list. And nature is free.

I grew up in Toronto. My buddies and I had bicycles and public transportation. We had no problem getting into nature every weekend and holiday and even some days after school. The fear of letting young people play out in nature is tragically misplaced. Over 95 percent of harm done to kids by an adult is by someone the family knows – the father, the uncle, the man across the street; it is highly unlikely that a dirty old man will be lurking behind a bush in a bit of nature for months waiting for a luckless victim to possibly pass by. At any rate, the normal thing is for kids to play in groups. This, of course, should be encouraged, as there is certainly safety in numbers.

So which holds more serious risk for young people? Obesity with its early onset of diabetes, possibly early heart disease, being medicated for ADHD and depression, committing suicide, falling into drug and alcohol abuse, or, on the other hand, playing out in nature? What about Internet predators and bullying on line? Those are dangerous and deadly issues and they are not uncommon. Let us worry about risks, but real

risks, not bogus ones. Just think about that list of issues and how expensive they are to society in medical costs, policing, the justice system and jails. Society would save money if schools and families put greatly increased resources into the nature-child connection.

Children's brains have been invaded by an alien. This alien goes by the name of electronics. It comes in the form of large televisions, computer screens, hand-held games and all the way down to cell phones and text messaging. My Orwellian fear for the future is that this generation will view all phenomena, including human relations, as information on a screen. I hasten to add I am not referring

to all of the younger generation. I know hundreds of kids for whom these fears do not apply. However, there are an increasing number of kids living in a virtual world. The virtual world is by definition not the real world. When this screen-trapped generation grows up, how will they vote? What kind of parents will they be?

Nikko Tinbergen, a bird behaviour scientist, did a study of herring gulls. He created large dummy gull eggs and placed one in a simulated nest beside a real nest with eggs. When the parent returned, she would see the spectacular artificial egg, which outshone her own smaller eggs, and would try to brood the fake egg even though it was awkward and, therefore, she let her own eggs die. This phenomenon is known as super-stimulae.

I also heard that potato beetles, although they thrive on a diet of potato leaves, have a passion for petunias. The catch is petunias are poisonous to the beetles. But, if given a choice, the beetles will go for the petunias and die. The obvious moral to the story is



**My Orwellian fear for the future is that this generation will view all phenomena, including human relations, as information on a screen.**

that we are confronted with superstimulae constantly, especially young people. Many of the choices we are given are bad for us and for society but we pick them anyway because our inner weaknesses are stimulated by outside forces to do so. For at least a million years humans have been hardwired for stimulation of the brain with serotonin, dopamine and other pleasure-inducing chemicals. The adrenalin-inducing risks in killing large mammals to bring home the bacon or fighting enemy clans to protect the family had a powerful evolutionary function. We don't need to do this very much in the 21st century so youth turn to risky sports, risky behaviour and computer games to feed their brains with the Palaeolithic rush. The need to have sex and devour calories has obvious evolutionary advantages in perpetuating the species. The 21st century result of this hardwiring is pornography, unwanted pregnancies and super-sized gluttony.

I remember giving lectures back in the 1960s describing a new species that was being created, particularly by TV. I called this species *homo sapiens teenager* "con-



sumerensis.” They were trained to require special food, drink, clothing, music and so that set them apart from adults. Using human vices such as greed, lust and an attraction to violence, the promoters of the products turned the young people into market targets. Unlike all previous generations of young people, their main role in society was to be self-indulgent.

This process was a great commercial success and continues today with even more expertise and intensity. I remember saying back in the 60s that, in the future, some of the parents’ ideas of family values would be based on the cartoon *The Flintstones* because these children were raised by TV. Well, it is now the 21st century and those TV kids are now parents or even grandparents. This may at least partially explain the parents’ alienation from nature. Their “natural” or unnatural tendency is to encourage their offspring into the video world. This screen world is designed by some of the smartest, most creative minds on the planet. They know all the hot buttons and superstimulae for each age group. Most kids don’t have a chance of resisting. If they do resist, they are branded as uncool. Recent studies have shown that constant and intense engagement with electronics is rewiring the children’s brains. Addiction is a real possibility. Ever sweeter, sexier, faster stimulæ are required to keep up the enthusiasm and sell the product. How will it all end? Will it ever end? How can going for a walk in the woods or watching a turtle ever compete with this gigantic juggernaut?

In my opinion, this issue is more important than the economy, which has its downs and also its ups. Or terrorism, which is a police matter and does not really affect most humans. E. F. Schumacher said the real problems facing the planet are not economic, they are not technical, they are philosophical. Which kind of philosophy will these screen world young people have when they are building future families, communities and nature? Will they care about endangered species? Or ecosystems when they can call up virtual spotted owls on the screen? We must rebuild the nature-child connection. We must bring the boots back into the bushes. It is essential for healthy bodies, minds, spirits and society.


It has been said the average North American young person can recognize over 1,000 corporate logos. However, they don’t know the names of their neighbours of other species – even 10 common trees and birds. I was asked if I had one wish for young people, what would it be? I replied that every Canadian, in fact, North American or world youth would get to know the names of their wild neighbours – maybe 20 to 50 of them. If you can’t name someone or something how can you care about them or it? This is why we founded the Robert Bateman “Get to Know” program, which uses an annual calendar contest and several other school-based initiatives to encourage thousands of Canadian youth to get outside and “get to know” their wild neighbours. In partnership with Scouts Canada (which is trying to revive its connection to nature roots), Get to Know is endeavouring to get a million Canadian children to have meaningful experiences in nature by 2011. You can learn more about the “Get to Know” program, which is also expanding to California this year at [www.gettoknow.ca](http://www.gettoknow.ca)

The organization Earth Rangers is combining the power of entertainment and children’s natural bond with animals to engage and motivate millions of children to adopt sustainable practices. The Earth Rangers website ([earthrangers.org](http://earthrangers.org)) is “inspiring children with a lasting passion to build a better future.” The Children Nature Network ([www.childrenand-nature.org](http://www.childrenand-nature.org)) provides a critical link between researchers and individuals and educators and organizations dedicated to children’s health and well being. Their “Leave No Child Inside” campaign [has been] launched in numerous North American communities.

There are fledgling movements springing up all over the place. Some schools and boards are encouraging nature study and field trips, etc. All of these efforts, however, are like the little Dutch boy with his finger in the dike striving to hold back the aforementioned juggernaut of commercialized youth culture. The efforts to bring kids back to nature will have succeeded when once again the parks and meadows and woodlands ring with the sounds of young people *continued p.18...*


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**HEALTH**



## Fetal monitoring mania

**L**et's try a skill-testing question: name a well-studied medical monitoring technology in wide use today, often used unnecessarily and frequently for things that have nothing to do with a patient's immediate health and typically used with people ignorant of its potential harms.

While one part of your brain tries to answer this, the other part is saying, "Impossible, this isn't the Dark Ages; this is the 21st century where modern health professionals don't use harmful medical procedures." Think again. Maybe you've already been on the receiving end of a health technology that's gone bad or taken a drug or test or had a procedure you learned you could have lived without. Did you feel you were well informed of the downsides?

The answer I had in mind for this skill-testing question continues the theme of medical screening I've been examining for a while. It concerns the electronic fetal monitor (EFM), a device used to keep track of a baby's heart rate and a mother's contractions during labour. The EFM is standard issue for women who are deemed to have a 'high risk' childbirth situation, such as a premature baby, a fetus in a breech position, if the mother is being artificially induced or if she is trying to have a vaginal birth after caesarean (VBAC). The machine is used with the best of intentions and the goal is to keep both mom and baby healthy during childbirth. Problems, however, arise in practice, as this machine that goes "Bing!" often sets off a cascade of medical interventions that can increase risks to mothers and babes.

In normal pregnancies, where continual fetal heart monitoring isn't required, the research has shown that using a continuous EFM increases the chances a woman will have an "assisted" vaginal birth (where a vacuum device or forceps will be used to extract the baby) and increases the rate of caesarean sections, where the baby is surgically removed. The vacuum device might help extract the baby, but it can also increase the risk of hemorrhage or bleeding within the skull or a rupture of blood vessels or other physical trauma to the baby's head.

There are other ways to monitor the baby's heartbeat, such as using a hand-held fetal monitor called the Doppler or the fetoscope, which is a kind of special stethoscope. The advantage of using intermittent monitoring is it allows the labouring woman to get up and walk around and find comfortable positions. The research has also shown that walking around, being massaged and having a warm bath can be effective comfort measures for women in labour and can really help speed up her labour. And unlike with drugs, these measures have no adverse effects so starting with these before seeking painkillers seems a sensible path to choose. However, allowing the labouring woman to freely walk around interferes with the hospital staff having a continuous read on the baby's heart rate.

One complication arising from continuous monitoring is that an electronic monitor can result in false signs of distress where the health professionals don't know if the baby's in trouble or not. "What if the heart rate suddenly spikes? Or drops? Is it serious? Maybe, maybe not. Do we want to take a chance?" And you know the rest: "Call the OR, we're going in..."

US physician and researcher Dr. Gilbert Welch makes some salient points about the fact that continuous fetal monitoring increases the risk of having an unneeded caesarean section. He addresses them in his new book *Overdiagnosed – Making People Sick in the Pursuit of Health*. He writes that, in analyzing the research of more than 37,000 women, the use of electronic fetal monitoring in the US is responsible "for escalating the frequency of C-sections from about 200 in every 1,000 births to 330 in every 1,000 births." In other words, the use of continuous monitoring creates about 130 extra C-sections per thousand babies born. He points to some research that says the use of the electronic fetal monitor pre-



vents seizures at the rate of about one seizure per thousand babies. In Dr. Welch's opinion, 130 new C-sections versus one avoided seizure means "the other 129 cases represent overdiagnosis: these babies were diagnosed with abnormally slow heart rates that didn't require emergency C-sections."

Sidestepping the considerable controversy about the risks and benefits of a C-section, we would all agree a C-section constitutes major abdominal surgery and while it almost always results in a good outcome for mother and baby, there are risks of complications as with any major surgery.

Is the fetal monitor the gateway drug to a C-section? That's how it looks to me in the following possible scenario: when a labouring woman arrives at the maternity ward, she is made to lay down and a machine is strapped on to her so she can't move much. Even though we know this position can compress the vessels that provide blood flow to the uterus and being immobile can prolong her labour and make it more painful, we seem to be okay with it. Why? Because we have solutions for those things too: labour-strengthening drugs and pain medications. Someone will think the baby is coming too slowly so it's time for an epidural and then while we're at it, let's start an IV drip of oxytocin (the hormone that can help speed up labour). Now, she's got even more umbilical cords tying her to the bed and her chances of getting up to move around become that much more remote.

This kind of stuff happens a lot. A few years ago, the US non-profit group Childbirth Connection ([www.childbirthconnection.org](http://www.childbirthconnection.org)) conducted an exhaustive survey on the childbearing experiences of US women. It provides an incredible

*Pregnancy is not a disease, but increasingly doctors are treating it like one. – Dr. Gilbert Welch*

snapshot of modern maternity medicine seen through the eyes of those women who receive it. Its key conclusion: "technology-intensive labour is the norm." Women reported having all kinds of interventions thrown at them while giving birth: 93 percent had electronic fetal monitoring; 86 percent were given an intravenous drip; 63 percent were given epidural analgesia and on and on it goes. I can think of only two things to say about this: the situation isn't likely radically different in Canada and "Yikes."

Of the 93 percent who received electronic fetal monitoring sometime during labour, most of them had it continuously. Just six percent of the mothers reported that a handheld device, such as Doppler, was used exclusively. What do the authorities say about the wisdom of continuous electronic fetal monitoring? The research is pretty conclusive in that there is no evidence it leads to better health outcomes in low risk women (the vast majority of pregnancies) so the United States Preventative Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends against its routine use.

According to Gilbert Welch, "Fetal monitoring has become such an ingrained fixture of medical care that, frankly, the task force [the USPSTF] seems to have simply given up on trying to dissuade doctors from using it." Some say it's not just medical culture that is at play; there is an elephant in the room and it's called lawyers. For those poor souls who forgo the technology and something goes wrong, litigation awaits.

The key question is can we be confident women are being told in clear and unambiguous terms about continuous electronic fetal monitoring and its contribution to the cascade of interventions that could end in that major surgery known as a C-section? Do today's mothers know that continuously monitored babies are not born in any better condition than those babies monitored at regular intervals? Are they aware of the harms of C-sections?

Probably not and I think this is where we need to make the big push to educate those who have the most to gain (or lose) by its use. As Dr. Welch says, "Pregnancy is not a disease, but increasingly doctors are treating it like one." ◀

**Alan Cassels** is a drug policy researcher at the University of Victoria and is currently working on a book on medical screening. Have you been screened for something and have a story to tell? Let him know at [cassels@uvic.ca](mailto:cassels@uvic.ca) Read his other writings at [www.alancassels.com](http://www.alancassels.com)

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## *saturated fats*

Western society's eating behaviour for many years. The AHA states that a diet high in saturated fats increases the chances you will develop heart disease, stroke or cancer. These outdated fallacies are still believed, practised and taught today.

In addition, the AHA does not recognize the benefits and necessity of some high-quality saturated fats in a healthy diet and body. It states, "Saturated fats and dietary cholesterol have no known beneficial role

in preventing chronic disease and are not required at any level in the diet." This dangerous recommendation, which arose from an unproven hypothesis of the mid-1950s, has been harming your health and that of your loved ones for half a century now.

Healthy saturated fats offer a number of health benefits and play important roles in the body. Butter and cheese, generally classified as saturated fats, do not pose the dangers that other animal fats do. Though butter is fat from animal source, it is a secreted fat, not a body or flesh fat. Surprisingly, butter consists of one-third unsaturated fatty acids, which gives it a melting point between 32 and 35°C. Butter contains 14 different fatty acids, including a very healthy fat called conjugated linoleic acid, or CLA for short. CLA is metabolized, bypassing the liver, and is associated with weight control. It is even sold as a supplement in health food stores for supporting weight loss programs.

Coconut oil is another particularly good and healthy fat, though dieticians and doctors have demonized it for even longer than butter. They believe it is a really bad fat because of the saturated lauric acid, which they erroneously believe raises cholesterol and clogs arteries. However, nothing could be further from the truth.

Many health professionals were taught to focus on the caloric values of saturated fats and never understood the many nutritional health benefits of saturated medium chain triglycerides (MCTs), which are abundant in high quality coconut oil.


For many years, political interests of the American Vegetable Seed Oil Association have promoted a negative image of saturated fats in coconut oil while promoting the heart healthy values of unsaturated omega 6 in seed oils. What an unbelievably big mistake this turned out to be. The overuse of refined omega 6 oils resulted in a nationwide epidemic increase of degenerative diseases, such as coronary heart disease, atherosclerosis, diabetes and obesity, all related to the consumption of refined vegetable seed oils such as sunflower, soy, safflower and especially canola oil.

To better understand the damage that refined oils cause in our body, visualize soft skin being repeatedly rubbed and scrubbed with a stiff bristle brush, until the skin is red and nearly bleeding. This is a good way to picture the inflammatory process that takes place in our arteries by consuming excessive refined omega 6 oils. A diseased artery wall looks as if someone took a rough brush to it.

Researcher, author and naturopathic doctor Bruce Fife explains, "A complex mixture of scar tissue, platelets, calcium, cholesterol and triglycerides are incorporated into the site to heal the injury. This mass of tissue forms arterial plaque. When this process occurs in the coronary artery, which feeds the heart, it is referred to as coronary heart disease – the most common cause of death in the western world."

Dr. T. Rajamohan, a professor at the department of biochemistry at the University of Kerala in India, has conducted human studies that clearly show the benefits of coconut oil in relation to heart disease. In one of his studies, each of the 258 participants consumed an average of 38 grams of coconut oil per day. The results indicated that coconut oil consumption does not cause an increase in blood cholesterol or LDL cholesterol, but instead increases beneficial HDL cholesterol.

World-renowned nutritionist and biochemist Mary G. Enig, PhD and co-founder and vice president of the Weston A. Price Foundation agrees. She suggests coconut oil contains complex ingredients, such as lauric acid, which reduce LDL and improve HDL cholesterol. The late Conrado S. Dayrit [recipient of the Lux-in-Domino Award in 2006 from Ateneo de Manila University] summarized in a scientific paper published in the Philippine Journal of Cardiology (2003), "Coconut oil consists predominantly of 65 percent medium chain fatty acids, which are metabolized rapidly in the liver to energy and do not participate in the biosynthesis and transport of cholesterol. Coconut oil, in fact, tends to raise the HDL and lower the LDL:HDL ratio."

Mainstream medicine made a terrible mistake when it advised people to avoid saturated fat in favour of foods high in omega 6 fats. It appears that by simply using raw, high-quality coconut oil in your daily diet in place of refined omega 6 oils, such as canola oil, you can achieve a remarkable degree of protection from heart disease and stroke. 



**Siegfried Gursche** is the founder of Alive Publishing Group Inc. and the former publisher of **Alive** magazine. After 30 years, he has recently retired from that role. He is a pioneer of the health food movement in Canada and the author of numerous books, including the **Encyclopedia of Natural Healing**.

**R**esearchers from a number of medical universities and public health institutes in Japan have concluded an average low intake of saturated fats is not associated with an increased risk of death from cardiovascular disease. In fact, some intake actually decreases the risk of dying from a stroke. The results were published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* (October 2010). Researchers stated, "Saturated fatty acid intake was inversely associated with mortality from total stroke."

Another recent study reported that saturated fats are not associated with an increased risk of coronary heart disease, including stroke or cardiovascular disease. Researchers from the Harvard School of Public Health and the Children's Hospital Oakland Research Institute analyzed 21 scientific studies to conclude, "There is no significant evidence for concluding that dietary saturated fat is associated with an increased risk of coronary heart disease or cardiovascular disease."

The study, also published in the prestigious *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* (March 2010), included a meta-analysis of 21 prospective epidemiologic studies. Epidemiology studies are an excellent way of conducting public health research because researchers look at patterns of health and illness and associated factors at the population level.

Exciting stuff, right? Right, but the reality is these "discoveries" are really old news. A Canadian dentist named Weston A. Price spent many years in the 1920s and 1930s travelling around the world visiting primitive people. He found that all the people still cut off from manufactured foods had beautiful teeth structure with no evidence of decay and excellent overall health. He noted that, among other things, the food they ate was rich in healthy fat, including saturated fats.

With observations such as these, both old and new, scientific and not, it makes one wonder about the American Heart Association's long-standing and current attitude towards saturated fats. It has heavily influenced our



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# Vitamin E

## The good, the bad and the ugly



One day, while in a store that sells vitamins, you pick up a bottle labelled vitamin E. While pondering your prospective purchase, your eyes briefly linger over the proviso “as d-alpha tocopherol.” But just how important can that be? After all, in bigger print, the label reassuringly reads “Vitamin E.” And in the flicker of a moment, you conclude, “It can only do my body a world of good.”

But then one day that assumption is shaken to the core. No less a thing happened to millions of people on November 10, 2004, when CBC – among other news providers – delivered a shocking headline: “Megadose vitamin E may boost risk of death.” A meta-analysis study conducted by researchers at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore “re-analyzed the results of 19 studies on vitamin E involving more than 136,000 patients in North America, Europe and China.” And what did the study of studies find? People taking 400 International Units (IUs) per day “were 10 percent more likely to die than if they hadn’t taken the supplement.”

Many no doubt ran to the cupboard where they kept their vitamin E only to find it was the same amount they too had been taking for years. Then on March 16, 2005, four months after people had forgotten the whole affair, another such study came crashing into the headlines. After looking at 3,394 patients 55 years-of-age or older with diagnosed cardiovascular disease or diabetes mellitus, the study’s authors found those taking a daily dose of 400 IUs of vitamin E had a higher risk of heart failure or death than control subjects not taking the vitamin at all. (Lonn, Eva

et al 2005, *Journal of the American Medical Association*.)

On the face of it, results like those are hard to dispute, especially from credible institutions like Johns Hopkins or medical journals like *JAMA*. To do so means challenging establishment medicine. Perhaps this is why the following simple yet critically important fact might have escaped the attention of the majority of journalists reporting on these studies: the reported research only looked at those who took the d-alpha tocopherol version of vitamin E, not its full family of compounds.

Is there a difference? You bet. The vitamin E family is comprised of four tocopherols and four tocotrienols, each bearing the designations *alpha*, *beta*, *gamma* and *delta*. In other words, it’s a “complex” of substances akin to vitamin B complex. But in framing the aforementioned stories, most journalists and scientists forgot to mention this fact. To them, vitamin E was, is and always will be synonymous to d-alpha tocopherol, despite the fact it is but an eighth of the vitamin E universe. And therein lay the problem. By failing to exercise sufficient due diligence, news reporters and scientists alike helped to entrench consumers’ ignorance about the entire vitamin E subject and may have unwittingly elevated a number of health risks in various members of the public.

Here are some of the facts they should have reported: in his article entitled “Critical Importance of Gamma E Tocopherol Continues to be Overlooked,” published in the January 2011 edition of *Life Extension* magazine, Kirk Stokel reminds readers “the Life Extension Foundation had warned [as far back as 1997] that taking only the alpha tocopherol form of vitamin E could displace critically important gamma tocopherol in the body. [And that] while alpha tocopherol inhibits the production of new free radicals, gamma tocopherol is required to trap and neutralize existing [ones].”

Stokel surveyed both recent research and research published literally years before the CBC reports in 2004 and 2005. One such study in the *Journal of Cardiovascular Medicine* in October of 1999 found gamma tocopherol helped protect the vascular system against atherosclerosis – a health condition likely present in many of the subjects described in the 2005 *JAMA* article. It does so by preventing the oxidation of LDLs (low-density lipoproteins) and by increasing nitric oxide synthase, the enzyme responsible for vessel-relaxing nitric oxide and by trapping destructive reactive nitrogen species. (Li D et al. 1999.)

Subsequent research found additional evidence confirming gamma tocopherol’s cardiovascular protective benefits. One study from 2007 found that a 100-mg daily dose reduced several risk factors for arterial clotting (like

LDL cholesterol) and platelet aggregation. (Singh I et al., *Asia-Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 2007.) Another study published in 2008 found that subjects ingesting 800 mg (or about 1,200 IUs) of gamma tocopherol “resulted in a reduction of oxidative stress and inflammatory markers in adults with metabolic syndrome. [The] effects were even more pronounced when 800 mg of alpha tocopherol was added, demonstrating that both forms of vitamin E are synergistically vital for optimal cardiovascular health.” (Devaraj, S et al. *Free Radical Biol Med*, March, 2008.)

This evidence represents a sobering counterpoint to the results of the Johns Hopkins and *JAMA*-published studies. Yet it by no means contradicts their results. Ironically, it actually supports their findings in the sense that a daily dose of 400 IUs of alpha-tocopherol *in the absence of other tocopherols and tocotrienols* might not be such a good thing.

And as it turns out, a similar alpha-versus gamma-tocopherol principle also seems to apply to other disease conditions as well, as outlined in the *Life Extension* article. For example, gamma-tocopherol helps to induce cell death (apoptosis) in a variety of cancer tissues as compared to alpha-tocopherol. (Jiang Q et al., *Annals of the New York Academy of Science*, Dec. 2004; and Takahashi, S et al., in *Prostate*, May 2009.) Gamma-tocopherol also helped to arrest cancer growth in prostate, colon, breast and lung cell tissue in animal models. (Jiang, Q et al, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, Dec. 2004.) It also reduced the development of blood vessel formation in tumours (Ju, J et al., *Carcinogenesis*, April, 2010.) and had a chemo-protective effect in human prostate studies. (Spaccarotella K.J. et al., *Nutrition Journal*, 2008.)

By now, you get the picture. So what if anything should be done when it comes to selling alpha-tocopherol under the global vitamin E label when clearly it is only part of a bigger family? I came to the conclusion our government needed to amend its labelling requirements. So in March of 2009, I wrote to the Minister of Health, Leona Aglukkaq, to suggest as much. In light of the science, I suggested manufacturers should only be able to sell vitamin E in Canada if it contained the full-spectrum of tocopherols and tocotrienols in a balanced formulation. This would help prevent alpha-tocopherol from suppressing or interfering with the role and health benefits that came from the other tocopherols and tocotrienols. I also argued the nomenclature approach we used for vitamin B complex was a useful precedent that could serve us well again. Vitamin B1 (thiamine) is not vitamin B2 (riboflavin); nor is it vitamin B3 (niacin, niacinamide, nicotinic acid) or B5 (pantothenic acid) or



B6 (pyridoxal phosphate) and so on up the vitamin B complex line. Each performs somewhat different functions and the public gets that. So let's apply a similar standard to how we go about labelling vitamin E.

On April 4, 2009, I got my answer, and by extension, Canadians got theirs. But be warned; part of it is fairly technical, something I promise to translate later. According to Health Canada's Natural Health Products Directorate (NHPD), of the eight scientifically acknowledged naturally occurring forms of vitamin E "only the RRR-alpha-tocopherol form is maintained in human plasma." For this reason... dosage values specified on the label are... "calculated based on the quantity of RRR-alpha-tocopherol present... [and]... this is an internationally supported convention as described in the authoritative publication... *Dietary Reference Intakes: The Essential Guide to Nutrient Requirements*." [by Otten JJ; Pitz Hellwig J; Meyers LD (2006), National Academies Press, Washington, D.C.]

Okay, so let's unpack this bafflegab one piece at a time. First, is it true only the RRR-alpha-tocopherol form is maintained in human plasma? Not according to one study published in 1992 by Wahlqvist et al. in *Nutritional Research*. It looked at serum responses to supplementation with 78 mg of tocotrienols over four weeks and found that plasma tocotrienol levels increased from less than one microgram per litre of blood to 8.14 micrograms per litre. Sounds a lot like being maintained to me.

Now, to a second question: is the vitamin's ability to stay in the blood what really matters in defining whether something should or should not be listed on a bottle as

ingredients? To get a better handle on this technical question, I consulted an expert; Dr. Larry McCuaig holds a Ph.D. in Nutrition from the University of Guelph in Ontario. While there, he conducted several studies involving vitamin E in animal feed. In one, he looked at the interactive effects between fat soluble vitamins A, D, E and beta carotene and found that vitamin E could help mitigate the harmful effects of high dose vitamin A.

Although Dr. McCuaig eventually went on to work at Health Canada, he spent most of his 30-year career working in Agriculture Canada on animal nutrition before moving over to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. After showing him the NHPD's reply, he said, "Health Canada is far behind the times in nutrition knowledge. Even if the other vitamin E [forms] do not last a long time in plasma, it's their level in the cell membranes that counts. [In fact] it could be circulating in protein-bound forms in plasma, [meaning] vitamin E's short half-life for some of its isomers in plasma may indicate a preferential uptake in tissues."

In other words, the body may be drawing other forms of vitamin E into cellular tissues faster than d-alpha tocopherol because the cells need them more and need d-alpha tocopherol less. Obviously, this raises a few disconcerting questions about Health Canada's reliance on plasma level criteria as the key determinant in what's listed on a vitamin E bottle.

To its credit though, the NHPD did say it was issuing dose-specific cautionary recommendations to appear on product labels to help mitigate health risks to certain vulnerable subpopulations. For example, if someone has cancer, they should consult a health practitioner prior to taking dosages greater than 180 mg of alpha-tocopherol (244.8 IUs). If someone has either diabetes or cardiovascular disease, they should consult a health care practitioner prior to taking dosages greater than 268 mg of alpha-tocopherol (364 IUs). If someone is on blood thinners, they should consult a health practitioner prior to taking dosages greater than 360 mg per day (540 IUs). Also to its credit, the NHPD said it was formally authorizing the inclusion of the other "forms" of vitamin E into what I felt should more properly be called vitamin E "complex" natural health products.

Yet despite those advisory precautions, several issues remain unaddressed. One is the sticky scientific question about how much alpha-tocopherol should be consumed as compared to gamma-tocopherol to reduce unwanted health risks. What should be the maximum recommended ratio? Should it be no more than two-to-one, as is now the case with calcium to magnesium? Nobody at Health Canada is saying, perhaps because the science on the matter is not yet settled. All it is prepared to say is that it had "conducted a comprehensive literature review of vitamin E supplementation trials in vulnerable subpopulations." Not exactly forthcoming about what it knows or doesn't know about the benefits of the other isomers on these subpopulations, let alone the rest of us.

But what is more disturbing is the proposition that Canada's vitamin labelling practices are bound to questionable scientific criteria agreed upon in an unspecified "internationally supported convention." It is hardly reassuring. As scientific knowledge advances, the regulatory definitions Health Canada relies on must *continued p.18...*



## How tocotrienols fit into the vitamin E mix

TOCOTRIENOLS have shown the greatest promise in breast cancer prevention and treatment. They have been shown to inhibit the growth of estrogen receptor-positive breast cancer cells by up to 50 percent in culture. In contrast, alpha-tocopherol has no impact on proliferation. To get the same 50 percent growth inhibition effect from alpha-tocopherol required a 20 times higher dosage than what was achieved by tocotrienols alone.

It also appears tocotrienols can greatly bolster the effectiveness of tamoxifen in breast cancer treatments. In cell culture studies, tamoxifen cut estrogen receptor-positive breast cancer cell growth in half. When palm oil-derived tocotrienols were used in conjunction with tamoxifen, the same growth suppression effect could be achieved with 75 percent less tamoxifen.

Several studies indicate tocotrienols induce breast cancer cell death (apoptosis).

Tocotrienols should be taken with food with some form of oil or fat. When they are taken on an empty stomach, absorption can decline to an average of 64 percent.



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# Calcium

## how much do you need?

Western thought tends to the approach that if a little is good, a lot must be better. How else to explain the medical profession sending people (mostly women) off to take 1,200, 1,500 and even 2,000 mg of elemental calcium per day. Even the medical profession acknowledges that all the calcium in the world won't rebuild bone-mass; at best, it simply forbids further withdrawal from the bones. Yet they [medical practitioners] continue to promote absurd amounts of calcium with little real evidence to support their position, in the face of recent studies that suggest huge amounts of calcium are, in fact, dangerous. And what they offer to rebuild the bone mass has also proven to be dangerous.

A study from New Zealand released in 2008 has linked calcium supplementation in post-menopausal women to stroke and heart disease. The same news release included findings from the *Journal of the Canadian Rheumatology Association*, which warned that using drugs designed to prevent and treat osteo-arthritis and fractures may cause bone tissue to collapse. "The results of our study demonstrate that bisphosphonate (also called diphosphonates, e.g. "Fosamax") use is associated with an increased risk of bone necrosis..." Which means "bone death."

In my practice, I have talked with dental workers who claim that they are seeing older women with teeth that are very hard on the outside but weak and collapsing on the inside, due to being on bisphosphonates. Here is a quote from the Stony Brook School of Dental Medicine: "In 2003 and 2004, the first reports of patients who developed necrosis of the jawbones while taking biophosphonates (bisphosphonates) appeared in the literature... Since then, more than 500 cases have been identified and the number of these cases continues to grow." (Dent Clin North Am. 2008 Jan.) Canadian physicians dispensed nearly eight million prescriptions for bisphosphonates in 2007.

Why do doctors recommend such high levels of calcium? It all started in the 50s and 60s when studies were done using calcium carbonate without any co-factors. Now, they have finally allowed that vitamin D might be important, but they have yet to clue in to the relationship between calcium and magnesium. Since their original reference studies used the most difficult calcium to digest (carbonate) on an empty stomach, in a tablet, without magnesium, let alone other co-factors such as zinc and potassium, they needed to get subjects to consume huge amounts of calcium before they could register any noticeable benefits. And the early studies were based on upping the dosage of calcium until spill-over appeared in the urine – not the smartest way to determine one's needs for a nutrient.

### Magnesium

For those who consume plenty of dairy (milk products), it is more important to make sure they are getting enough magnesium, rather than calcium. Dairy products provide too much calcium, which ultimately can deplete

magnesium from the body. In traditional cultures (Asian and African) that show few signs of osteoporosis, the average daily calcium intake is far below than what is recommended in Western nations.

A recent study, in which post-menopausal women took only magnesium and no calcium, showed a halt in bone loss. This is due to most people consuming dairy products and getting plenty of calcium, but not eating sufficient amounts of dark green vegetables (broccoli, kale, chard, etc.) in order to get enough magnesium to properly balance the high calcium intake.

Now that there has been a link established between calcium supplementation and increased levels of stroke and heart disease in post-menopausal women, it is time to roll back the recommended amounts of calcium. The other problem with excessive calcium intake is the tendency of the body to deposit it in joints, creating arthritic



With a link established between calcium supplementation and increased levels of stroke and heart disease in post-menopausal women, it is time to roll back the recommended amounts of calcium.

conditions and bone spurs. If anyone has calcification anywhere in the body, the natural treatment is to stop ingesting calcium as a supplement and from dairy products and to simply take 500 to 600 mg of magnesium per day (as citrate, in divided doses) for a few months, until the magnesium has emulsified the calcium deposits down to a level that eliminates the symptoms.

### Calcium supplements

Calcium-magnesium combinations are available in a variety of forms including chelated, citrate, coral and carbonate, amongst others. While the citrate form of calcium is usually touted as the most digestible and the carbonate form the least, it turns out the advantage of citrate over carbonate is only based on being taken on an empty stomach.

Since it is generally not advisable to take isolated nutrients on an empty stomach, if you are taking your minerals with food the form of mineral is not that important. Some chelates are superior to others though, with the Albion trademark being one of the few forms that are clinically tested and patented.

Your daily intake of calcium, including the food you eat, should be not much more than 500 mg to 600 mg of elemental calcium. Elemental refers to the actual amount of calcium absorbed. For example, 1,000 mg of calcium


citrate will provide only 200 mg of actual calcium, the rest being the carrying agent: citrate. Calcium carbonate, which includes coral calcium, is 40 percent elemental calcium, meaning that 1,000 mg of this form will provide 400 mg of useable calcium; this also means a product can get more elemental calcium into a smaller space if they use a carbonate or coral form.

Most labels are now required to state the elemental amount of minerals. In Canada when the form of mineral is shown in brackets, the number following must be an elemental figure. Thus, "Calcium (citrate) 200mg" means you are getting 200 mg of fully utilizable calcium. Whereas "Calcium citrate 200 mg" means that you are only getting 40 mg of elemental calcium.

This becomes a concern mostly with capsules, which can only hold about half as much material as a tablet, therefore tending to confuse the consumer into thinking there is more calcium content than there actually is. The problem with tablets is they are often poorly digested since they are essentially little rocks (being made of compressed minerals) so it is preferable to get calcium in a capsule, chewable or liquid form to guarantee digestion. One trick to test out the digestibility of calcium, or any other tablet, is to put it into vinegar for an hour then swirl it about and see if it has dissolved at all. This mimics your stomach acid and indicates the "disintegration" factor of the tablet.

### How much?

Every two parts of calcium use approximately one part of magnesium. Therefore, most cal-mag products are in a two-to-one ratio (e.g. 300 mg calcium to 150 mg magnesium). And this is fine for those who don't use dairy products, but for those who do use them on a regular basis (almost daily), I feel it is more important they pay attention to their magnesium intake. For the average dairy consumer, I suggest a one-to-one ratio of calcium to magnesium, ideally about 500 mg to 600 mg of each.

If you are happy taking 600 mg or less of elemental calcium (in divided doses), you can use a one-to-one ratio of calcium to magnesium. At levels much above 600 mg per day of calcium, you must use the traditional two-to-one ratio, as high levels of magnesium can have a laxative effect. (Magnesium, in the oxide form, is a good safe laxative if that is what one needs: about 500 mg, elemental, before bed.) The advantage of taking an equal ratio cal-mag supplement is the calcium will use half the magnesium to assimilate itself and the other half will be available to serve other functions in the body, including helping to absorb the calcium from dairy products more efficiently. 

Adapted from **Health Secrets for the 21st Century (Volume One)** by Kenneth W. Peters. The booklet is available from Health Management Books and through [www.nutristart.com](http://www.nutristart.com) and [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) Ken Peters has been a nutritional consultant for the past 20 years and is a published author who also works in product research and development for Nutristart Vitamin Company, among others.



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## A caveman diet?

**W**ould a Paleo diet work in today's world? Would it be an optimal way for everyone to eat?

Although we might envision a past Garden of Eden or a tribe of hunter-gatherers for whom life was simple and food was unprocessed and free of additives and pesticides, how realistic is it for us to adopt the diet from the Palaeolithic Era? Well, it is unrealistic for a number of reasons.

For one, anthropologists are uncertain as to what early humans actually ate. There are only hints and the evidence is far from explicit. There are no shopping lists, dinner menus, piles of bones, peach pits, strawberry stems or nuts, tubers or dried greens for us to examine. Plant food is more vulnerable to deterioration and its contribution to the diet is the subject of raging debate among anthropologists. Whereas images of the era typically depict hunters with spears, many contend that apart from the northern regions, gathering was a more safe, effective and productive way to acquire the family's food.


While early diets included game, it is estimated that two-thirds or more of the calories came from leafy greens, fruits, nuts, seeds and other plant parts. Naturally, diets varied greatly from one region to another. Back then, wild fruits were higher in minerals and protein and lower in sugar than fruits cultivated for today's

**Humans evolved from a diet that was far more alkali-forming than standard diets today.**

tastes. In diets of the !Kung of the Kalahari Desert and the Hazda of Tanzania, up to 95 percent of the calories came from plants. More recently, the traditional Hopi diet centred on purslane, other wild greens, corn, a mineral-rich plant ash preparation, beans, dried melon and peaches. Humans evolved from a diet that was far more alkali-forming than standard diets today. When humans switched to eating grains and large quantities of animal products, they placed an immensely greater acid load onto our kidneys and the rest of our system.

Modern humans who aspire to a caveman diet generally drive to the natural foods market or subscribe to an organic delivery service for their veggies, fruits and meat. Early humans had to work hard to obtain food, chasing game and clambering up and down hills to gather fiddlehead ferns, the inner bark of certain trees, berries and leafy greens. The wildlife our ancestors consumed had far less fat and a better quality of fat than beef has today – even when it is organic beef from cattle that grazed on grass instead of grain when being fattened for market.

Today, a diet based on game and wild plant foods, hunted and gathered by those consuming it, is achievable by a miniscule percentage of people. Even if killing animals is not an issue for you, the so-called caveman diet we might adopt is a far cry from that of our ancestors. To be realistic, life wasn't so easy back then; Palaeolithic skeletons show a life expectancy of 35.4 years for men and 30 years for women, shortened by infant mortality, accidents and natural hazards.

If your priorities include good health and a concern for the environment, you can integrate the best features of the diets of early humans. You'll end up with menus centred on whole plant foods: vegetables such as squash and yams and plenty of greens, fruits, seeds and nuts. Legumes make more sense than cholesterol-laden (even when free-range) meat and poultry or fish that is farmed or harvested from polluted oceans. Omit the refined sugar, flour, fats and oils. You'll end up with a way of eating that supports your health and the health of the planet. 

**Vesanto Melina** is a local registered dietitian, author and consultant [www.nutrispeak.com](http://www.nutrispeak.com). For a list of references for this article, see the online Nutrispeak column at [www.commonground.ca](http://www.commonground.ca)

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# The salad box



The first year we moved into our new home I asked my husband Guy to build me 12 cedar planter boxes for Christmas, one-foot deep and six-feet long, on short legs. Eleven years later, I decided to use six of these planter boxes for winter food crops. I refilled them with screened compost and planted them in fall, using both direct seeding and transplants to fill them up with food. In November, just ahead of the first harsh freeze, we wheeled them into the unheated greenhouse using a flatbed dolly.

We have been harvesting nutritious greens of kale, spinach, hardy lettuces, arugula, beets, chard, parsley, cilantro, radicchio, chicory, scallions, pea shoots and mizuna mustard all winter long. We have been adding greens to breakfast smoothies (see recipe), fresh salads and sandwiches as well as steaming them for side vegetables and using them in stir fries, soups and casseroles.

We suffered a few brutal freezes this winter that knocked out a lot of the vegetables outdoors, but these salad boxes, under one level of protection from a single-paned glass greenhouse, sailed through. If you do not have a greenhouse, cold-hardy winter vegetables are just as happy if grown under a cold frame or a protective plastic cloche, which keeps them frost-free.


When the sun shines and the greenhouse (or cold frame) heats up check to see if they need watering, as the soil can dry out. Otherwise, very little watering is needed and there's little to do but harvest. Heck, you can even go away for a month in winter and forget about them completely. The most important thing to consider when container growing is the growing medium you use in the container. It needs to be fertile and well drained, a medium that does not dry out too fast or that sets to 'concrete' over time.

Screened compost makes the perfect growing medium if it contains all the vital nutrients and the best way to ensure the highest quality is to make what I call 'super duper' compost. When screened, it makes a wonderful, rich crumbly potting mix (or top dressing) for planters and barrels.

## 'Super Duper' compost ingredients:

- Aged manure (cow, sheep, horse, llama, goat or chicken)
- Leaves (Tip: store extra in circular wire cages in the fall)
- Herbaceous prunings
- Weeds (avoid weeds in seed or pernicious weeds)
- Spoiled hay
- Grass clippings
- Nettles (in season)
- Comfrey (in season)
- Seaweed (in winter)
- Wood ash (uncontaminated)
- Sawdust and fine woodchip (not cedar)

When spring rolls around, I remove the plants that are no longer productive and replant with a host of new vegetables. I encourage you to try growing food this way; you'll be surprised at the

diversity of plants you can grow in containers. This method also makes harvesting food very convenient. I often use the 'cut-and-come-again' technique, snipping off leaves to within two inches of the soil and letting them come back up again. 

Carolyn Herriot is author of **The Zero-Mile Diet: A Year-Round Guide to Growing Organic Food** (Harbour Publishing). She is a food security consultant and grows 'Seeds of Victoria' at The Garden Path Centre in Victoria, BC. <http://earthfuture.com/gardenpath/>



Photo © Viktorja Kuprijanova

## Goldie's Goddess Smoothie

(Makes 4 cups)

A perk up 'vita-mineral' boost any time of day.

Put in a blender:

- 1 bunch greens: kale, spinach or chard
- 3 large carrots, chopped into chunks
- 5 medium apples, cored and chopped
- 2-3 tbsp. fresh ginger root (to taste)
- ½ lemon, juiced



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...Bateman from pg 7

enjoying themselves in nature (without adult supervision) during most of their leisure hours. Computers are, of course, necessary in the modern world, but we need a balance. More time in nature would obviously benefit adults as well.

Because the cost of the social ills brought about in part by the "nature deficit disorder" is so high, it would pay society to greatly increase budgets for outdoor education. Back in the 1970s when there were slightly higher budgets, my wife Birgit and I would help to lead week-long canoe trips organized by the high school where we both taught. We would see misbehaving "yahoos" (usually boys) transformed into helpful and caring individuals by the end of the trip. I have no doubt that many of society's expensive ills would be alleviated if every high school child spent a week in nature every year. Two weeks would be better. Other projects could be initiated. Teacher nature clubs could be organized in which perhaps like-minded teachers from a given district could get together for half a day each month to do some nature exploring. If the teachers don't feel it in their hearts, they can never convey an enthusiasm for nature to their students.

Family nature clubs could be organized on a similar basis, perhaps half a Saturday or Sunday each month. If families are involved, transportation and liability issues should not be a problem. Although my parents were not naturalists, we drove to a bit of nature and went for hikes every Sunday afternoon. One half-

day spent out in nature seems like a reasonable proposition for families. The benefits would be well worth it. If young people spend around 40 hours per week gazing at some screen, surely they could spend two to three hours a week out in nature.

There was a movement spearheaded by the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia to create gardens in school grounds. This is a safe and economical way to get children outdoors and engage them with the realities of the natural world. Our local elementary school on Salt Spring Island could not afford a manufactured playground, at first. So the children played during recess and lunch hour in the neighbouring woods. They played tag in the bushes, climbed trees and got muddy in the little creek. Then the money for the playground and "jungle gym" was found. After that the children's behaviour deteriorated; there was more quarrelling and bullying. Nature really works wonders.

This problem is so large it needs addressing on many fronts by governments, school boards, schools, NGOs, individual families and by the kids themselves. Where there is no will, there is no way, but, as the more optimistic saying goes, "Where there is a will, there is a way." ❏

Reprinted from [www.batemanideas.com](http://www.batemanideas.com), a compilation of Robert Bateman's "Reflections on the Philosophy of the 20th Century."

...Vitamin E from pg 13

keep pace. Why? Because when old knowledge turns out to be wrong, as appears to be the case if one takes high doses of alpha-tocopherol in the absence of other tocopherols and tocotrienols, as the widely covered *JAMA* and Johns Hopkins studies would suggest, definitional foot-dragging will likely cost lives. And while the NHPD does now officially recognize the other seven versions of vitamin E as part of the vitamin's broader spectrum mix, this, arguably, is something that should have happened over a decade ago when gamma-tocopherol's importance first came to the attention of researchers and not because an independent science writer just happened to bring it their attention in a letter to the Health Minister in 2009.

The lessons we can learn from the vitamin E saga are many. One is that Health Canada must place higher priority on keeping its definitions, recommendations and regulatory practices

in-synch with as much new scientific knowledge as possible. Another is that Health Canada must cast its information-gathering nets further afield. Calculating vitamin E's dosage values based exclusively on the fact alpha-tocopherol is the only form of vitamin E maintained in blood plasma seems more than a tad narrow.

And as for vitamin E labelling practices in general, I believe Canada needs to be a proactive leader on the international stage, not an obeisant follower. After all, isn't Health Canada's primary mission to enhance and protect the health of Canadians? ❏

**Paul H. LeMay** is an independent science writer based in Vancouver. He is currently researching and co-writing a book on the victimization process with an Ottawa-based psychiatrist. Please see the online version at [www.commonground.ca](http://www.commonground.ca) for recommended amounts.

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# Grow-In Grocer bankruptcy

Joseph Roberts

Street, and some loaned hundreds of thousands of dollars for Deb's other projects. One such project called Butterfly Kisses allegedly ran a farm where abused women could learn employment skills. Does it exist? We don't know.

Thinking he was working on Deb's behalf, one gentleman gathered a large number of Christmas toys for children living at the farm for battered women. The toys showed up months later, auctioned off after the bankruptcy. There are too many other personal stories to repeat here.

After February 28<sup>th</sup>, Deb contacted Deloitte & Touche (D&T) on Dunsmuir Street where "The Home Grow-In Grocer Ltd made an assignment on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of March 2011...the sole director and owner of Grocer was Ms. Deborah Ann Reynolds."

At the March 24<sup>th</sup> creditors meeting, Deb was absent, and many questions went unanswered. D&T stated that they had "received fee guarantee in the form of a third party retainer (deposit) with respect to our (their) fees. \$12,500 has been guaranteed by Ann Hyldtoft, of which \$7,500 has been received." It turns out Ann Hyldtoft is Deb's mother.

D&T's preliminary report on the bankruptcy of The Home Grow-In Grocer Ltd. wrote, "Based on the preliminary review, the books and records do not appear complete and have been poorly maintained." As well "The Trustee (D&T) concludes that collections will likely be significantly less than that indicated in the statement of affairs".

Deb's bio was emailed to *Common Ground* on February 18, 2011 just weeks before she declared bankruptcy. Here are a few quotes:

"Deb Reynolds is spearheading her own niche in the local food market and, at the same time, helping local farmers make a living. It all springs out of her

belief in community connectedness and her loyalty to BC-grown food."

"My philosophy of life now is that people need to step out of their comfort zone and help their neighbour."

It's a philosophy that drives her and her business, a business that's grown out of personal adversity. When asked where she sees herself in five years, Deb responds, "I see myself at the grocer doing ice cream cones and being part of my community. The grocery is where I want to be."

There were glowing articles such as *The Little Local Food Connector That Could*, *How Home Grow-In plays a key role by helping nearby farmers find Vancouver customers* in the Tyee. Social media wrote about how wonderful Home Grow-In Grocer supported local farmers and organic food.

Deb was quite convincing. So much so that Meeru Dhalwala and Vikram Vij's popular *Vij's at Home* cook book contains this passage under the heading *Home Grow-In Old-fashioned Indian Carrot Halwa*: "In March 2010 Deborah received the Order of Canada for facilitating the transfer of 160,000 pounds of organic products – that would otherwise have rotted or been composted – from local farms to local food banks." But a search of the Order of Canada website found no mention of Deb Reynolds.

Continuing in *Vij's at Home*, "When Meeru asked, 'You don't take credit cards?' Deborah whipped back, 'No, but I'll take trust.'"

Well, Deb did take trust and she did take money. The many creditors are left with the million-dollar question. Where did all the money and trust go?

If you have pertinent information, please contact the Vancouver Police Department re: Deb Reynolds, incident # 11-36878. You are welcome to send Common Ground comments to editor@commonground.ca. Let's see how this story unfolds.

**D**eb Reynolds got lots of people to trust her. She opened a little shop at 196 West 18<sup>th</sup> called The Home Grow-In Grocer. Neighbours were so taken by her that they wanted to lend her money. And they did.

There were large lenders, and hundreds of local folks who paid Deb up front for her Grow-In Grocer box programs.

It went like this. Deb told people they needed to pay up front for what would later come to them as boxes of local and/or organic food. Deb said she needed the prepayments for the local farmers so they could plan ahead. It didn't quite happen that way. Shortly after the deadline to prepay for the next instalment of food boxes Deb declared bankruptcy.

One neighbourhood couple with a baby on the way put \$500 down thinking they would have food security if not a job. Like many others, they will not see their boxes of food, nor likely get their money back.

Some gave \$250, \$500, \$900 or more for produce, meat, fish or other food boxes. Some bought a \$10,000 share in the second outlet Deb started at 3010 Cambie

## Call for Royal Commission on nuclear power

Gordon Edwards, CCNR & Michel Duguay, MSQN

**T**hree Mile Island taught the world that nuclear power is inherently dangerous. With Chernobyl the entire world witnessed the awesome power of a total meltdown. At Fukushima we have seen simultaneous partial meltdowns in three reactors and four spent fuel pools. Canada's reactors have a different design, but the potential for catastrophe is ever present. It was not an earthquake and tsunami that caused Japan's nuclear catastrophe, it was a total electrical blackout. Such a blackout can be caused in a variety of ways. Like other countries, Canada needs to take stock and reassess the

risks and benefits of nuclear technology.

All federal political parties are being asked to support a non-partisan Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Future of Nuclear Power in Canada. As part of that inquiry process, no new licenses for nuclear power plants in Canada, whether new build projects or refurbishment projects, or off-site transportation of nuclear wastes produced by nuclear reactors, would be granted until the Royal Commission has concluded its work.

Groups from across Canada have joined together in this appeal so that the people of Canada will be adequately consulted on the future of this inherently dan-

gerous industry. The basic question is do Canadians wish nuclear power production to be expanded or to be phased out?

Before proceeding any further down the nuclear path, we ask the Canadian government to finally give all Canadians a chance to debate the risks and benefits of nuclear power in relation to its alternatives in a politically meaningful forum.

Further information at Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility, [www.ccnr.org](http://www.ccnr.org) and Mouvement Sortons le Québec du Nucleaire, [www.sortonsquebecnucleaire.org](http://www.sortonsquebecnucleaire.org)





# Being kind or being right

*When you have a choice to be right or to be kind, choose kind and watch your suffering disappear. – Dr Wayne Dyer*

There is an aspect of human behaviour I have never been able to understand. It is the tendency to treat strangers or acquaintances better than loved ones. It could be a dad coaching his son, berating him in a way he would never do to other players or it might be a charming and gracious spouse, loved by the world, who becomes verbally abusive behind closed doors.

The part that lashes out is raw ego, reacting and uncensored. Most people

Winning the power struggles can mean slowly losing our best friend.

would be embarrassed to have anyone outside the family witness this behaviour. It is generally not done in public or to others because ego does not want to be judged or do anything that would jeopardize the good opinion of others.

Of course, this is not a particularly evolved way of being. Clearly, we know those negative behaviours are inappropriate or we would not try to hide them from the world. How does ego rationalize doing in private what it would never do in public?


There are several issues here. An individual may be unconscious, unable even to see the contradiction. Ego also has a tendency to blame others for its behaviour. "She just made me so mad." Finally, ego also thinks it is right and somehow being the one who is right makes it okay to lord it over others.

This behaviour is out of integrity on many levels. Having one persona at home and another for the world means we are not being authentic. Treating outsiders better than loved ones indicates a problem with priorities. Ideally, we should treat all people with respect and dignity, at all times. And certainly we should feel a sense of responsibility towards those with whom we are in relationship, be it a partner or child, as they look to us for love, acceptance and a sense of safety.

What often leads away from integrity in close relationships is ego's need to be right. At some point in intimate relationships, after the honeymoon period, couples often begin to engage in a process of trying to change the other. Each has an idea of what a wife/husband/lover should be and begins focusing on where the partner does not measure up. Often, a conflict will develop and this is where the good guy/bad guy, right/wrong polarity thinking begins to develop.

It is a slippery slope once this starts, as resentments begin to build and the sense of being unconditionally loved and accepted that was so engaging in the beginning begins to diminish. Caught up in the power struggles that develop, we forget that making ourselves right makes the other person wrong. Winning the power struggles can mean slowly losing our best friend.

We can accept there will be differences in all relationships. We know that raising children has its challenges, but we must remember we chose this partner and brought these children into the world. We created these relationships and we have a responsibility to nurture and care for them.

If we see the challenge not as trying to control or change others, but rather to evolve as we meet the challenges with loving kindness and wisdom, we can escape the wheel of suffering. As we raise our own consciousness, it stimulates higher consciousness in those around us. That is, after all, the main agenda here. 

Gwen Randall-Young is an author and psychotherapist in private practice. For articles and information about her books, Self Care CDs and the new "Creating Healthy Relationships" series, visit [www.gwen.ca](http://www.gwen.ca) See display ad this issue.

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# Just now

## an interview with Eckhart Tolle

To read Eckhart Tolle's latest column, please see the current print edition of *Common Ground*. For copyright reasons, we are authorized to publish this column in our print version only.

**JR:** In your new book, I feel like you're the modern equivalent of the explorers that came to the new world, but an explorer and documenter of consciousness, discovering a new world.

**ET:** Yes, discovering is the right word. It's not that you need to make a great effort to attain it or bring it about or acquire it. It's discovering it's already there in you – conscious awareness that's obscured, or partially obscured, in many people. It's a discovery of something already there.

It's like waking up after a dream, because identification with the thinking mind and its stories and the old emotional conditioning is like being immersed in a kind of dream world, which very often turns into a nightmare – acting out old conditioned patterns again and again. The whole structure of the egoic mind is an old dysfunction.

There's some evidence that the ego started about 6,000 years ago, but nobody can say for sure. Before that, humans were in a state of innocence. When we go beyond the dysfunction of the ego, we regain our original innocence, but on a much deeper level. This is why Jesus said unless we become as little children we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

So, returning to the original innocence, and at the same time going much deeper into that with full awareness – that's the process. We're coming out of thousands of years of dreadful suffering, almost the whole of recorded history of humanity. If you really look at it in an unbiased way, as if you'd never seen it before, one cannot but admit that, to a large extent, 80 to 90 percent of it is a history of pathological insanity, the suffering that humans have created for themselves and, of course, inflicting it upon others.

**JR:** And exporting it through colonization to the new world.

**ET:** Yes, so the important part of the awakening process is the realization of the insanity in human history, collectively, to this day playing itself out in world events. Also, to be aware of the insanity within oneself – old, dysfunctional patterns that come again and again that create suffering. So when you see that you're insane, then you're not completely insane. Sanity comes the moment you realize the fact of insanity. To see insanity is not a negative thing.

**JR:** At least you're out of denial.

**ET:** Yes, that's why in the film *A Beautiful Mind*, for example, which is about a mathematical genius who did have a mental dysfunction, his mind was developed in certain areas but he was also insane. The viewer of the film doesn't know that until a certain point when the character realizes that many of his experiences are delusions. At that moment, his healing begins. He's not cured yet, but his healing begins because he's recognized his own insanity. That recognition can only come out of sanity, which is the awareness of unconditioned consciousness.

**JR:** I remember you saying before you published your last book that the next one would be about why there isn't peace on this planet. Was finding a solution one of the major intentions of *A New Earth*?

**ET:** Yes, to see the nature of the major dysfunction. That's why I talk quite a bit about the ego in this book. We need to recognize the nature of the dysfunction. Sometimes, even very great Eastern teachers sometimes neglect that part because they're not really touched by the magnitude of, especially, the Western ego. So it's very important for us to see the dysfunction so that we can recognize it when it arises.

Part of the new book is about recognizing the ego, which I regard as a semi-autonomous energy. It's an energy field. Every thought you think is an energy field. It has a form and then it dissolves and then there is another form. The ego itself is an energy field and it has a collective and individual aspect. Every indi-



vidual ego is part of the collective. They're connected. Every individual is a manifestation of the collective. To recognize that is essential because the ego, being a very clever entity, has many ways of reappearing. Even if you've seen it in one disguise, it can suddenly reappear in a new one.


You might suddenly realize your whole sense of self, identity, is being derived from your possessions and social position. You see that your whole sense of identity is bound up with that and you recognize one aspect of ego. Well, usually it only comes to people when they suffer, when the identification with something no longer works...

It's recognizing the ego in its many disguises. I've met Buddhist monks who had enormous egos without knowing it. I remember being in a monastery afraid to approach them because they seemed so aloof. Yet I've met other Buddhist monks who were like little children and it was a joy to talk to them because they'd laugh and not take themselves seriously at all. They didn't take the whole Buddhist



thing seriously either, yet they practised it knowing it was only a form and they weren't identified with it.

There's a dimension in us that has nothing to do with content. Self-realization is that I am not that. I'm not my story, not my grievances and hang-ups, not the story of me that I'm telling other people at parties or repeating in my head again and again. That is only form. It's temporary.

When you see what you're not, it's already liberating. Something inside you breathes a sigh of relief. Then, of course, the mind begins to ask, "What are you if you are not that?" It wants an answer. In other words, it wants some new form. It wants a new thought. There must be a thought that I am. But it doesn't work like that. That's why the great book the Tao Te Ching starts with the line that the Tao that can be spoken of is not the true Tao because Tao – in the ancient Chinese way of putting it – is the formless dimension. You could say pure consciousness, but with any term we use we have to be careful it's not mistaken for "It." Otherwise, the mind comes in and says, "Oh, consciousness, yes. I believe that I'm consciousness." It's not another belief. It's finding that spaciousness inside yourself that's there when you let go of identification of form. 

Excerpted from **Just now: a two-part interview with Eckhart Tolle** by Joseph Roberts. Read the full interview online. Go to [www.commonground.ca](http://www.commonground.ca) Click on archives. Click on 2007 at the top of the page. For part one, click on September 2007. For part two, click on October 2007.

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Mac McLaughlin

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# StarWise

April 2011

A MOST PROFOUND and provocative time has arrived. The planet is spinning faster, much faster, and no, not the rate of motion, but if the activity of our collective karma could be measured, it would be right off the scales. Big movements are in the wind. It is not the time to talk nicely or politely; it's time to take the gloves off and get down to some bare-knuckle exchanges. My, my, what is he going on about, one might ask?

Now that you have asked, let me run it down for you. The new moon on April 3 tells the tale of the energy that will prevail throughout the month. A new moon indicates new starts, fresh beginnings and launches of any type of activity or enterprise. Mars' lord of the Aries new moon is conjunct with Uranus in the first degree of Aries, while Saturn makes an exact opposition to the new moon. It means that we have entered a time that is highly volatile, shaky and explosive. Mars is the planet of war, violence and aggression while Uranus is the planet of revolution, upset, shock, shift and change. Saturn is pretty much the grim reaper and he casts his heavy hand into the play. Possibly, the trouble spots will ignite; maybe they already have. At the time of this writing on March 4, all eyes are on the mid east. Near or far, everything is in



**ARIES** Mar 21 - Apr 19

Ram or lamb, what will it be?

From one Aries to another, you will never come across a time like this again in your life. Fate and destiny impatiently await thee. Move or be moved; take charge or get out of the way.



**CANCER** Jun 21 - Jul 22

Oh passionate one, it is your time to impact the world.

Presently, it is your stage. It may not be easy and the demands are heavy, but you might not mind. Everyone's watching on this one. Make your moves now.



**TAURUS** Apr 20 - May 21

Much is happening behind the scenes and it will soon be revealed. One of your best years is taking shape and you must make the best of it. Start now and strive for the high ground by clearing and cleansing wherever it is needed.



**LEO** Jul 23 - Aug 22

High adventure is on the horizon and great times are indicated. Trinkets and baubles may no longer interest you, but seeking love and spirituality may very well capture your heart and soul. Move toward the light.



**GEMINI** May 22 - Jun 20

Practically the whole of the heavens is casting warm and positive glances your way. With a slight effort on your part, the universe will respond abundantly while with a major effort, you can achieve more than you imagined.



**VIRGO** Aug 23 - Sep 22

Something deep and moving takes place. Discoveries, including self-discovery, may come your way. Grace, love and harmony cast their glances. Inheritances, mysteries and a deep longing stir your curiosity.

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flux, as a new churning and burning desire to get things right for the sake of humanity inspires us to do something about it, now. It is not time to cower in fear; it is time for movement and protestation across the land. All fiefdoms will get a shakeout and they may be destroyed. Personally and collectively, now is the time to get it on and reach for the moon, sun and stars.

Did you read David Suzuki's interview last month? He is an Aries and I'm an Aries and Aries people are on the move, holding the torchlight and pointing in the direction we must move towards. Save the humans, whales and every other thing that needs saving.

Okay, relax, breathe in, breathe out and do it again. The good news is that Jupiter, king of the gods, is conjunct with the new moon and gives a promise of faith, good will and lucky breaks all around. In other words, it is not doomsday, but it is a time in which we must arise and put our collective shoulder to the grindstone and cleanse, streamline and correct the problematic areas wherever and whatever they are. I know it all sounds ominous, but, in actuality, we have a grand opportunity to truly make some giant steps. Presently, we're winnowing the Neanderthals and removing the despots and the deeply ingrained power pockets that have become insanely abusive and hugely detrimental to our well being. The full moon on April 17 will tell the tale. It is just as impactful as the new moon and once again we will be incensed, as we move toward freedom and justice for all. 



**LIBRA** Sep 23 - Oct 22

A bucket chart has formed on April 3 and the handle is in Libra. The six-planet alignment in Aries is funnelling into Libra, bringing a profound time of movement, controversy, contrast and change. Work within it.



**SCORPIO** Oct 23 - Nov 21

Your main objective throughout April is taking care of yourself, health-wise. It is also a time to sort through and rearrange everything. Getting others onside and working collectively may bring success your way.



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22 - Dec 21

Your solar house of business, entertainment, children, love and romance is totally activated throughout the month. It means you can make your way with ease and style, as unique opportunities crop up now.



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22 - Jan 19

Home and family feature stronger than ever. Perhaps they have been ignored as you climbed your mountain toward success. Now is the time to repair and renew and enjoy the fruits of your labour.



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20 - Feb 19

A new attitude is developing. Creative levels are on the rise and opportunities to show your stuff emerge. It is a good month to mix and mingle and extend yourself to others. Muster your courage and bust a move or two.



**PISCES** Feb 20 - Mar 20

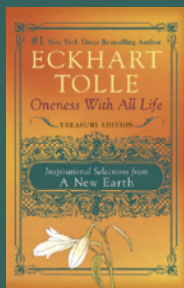
It may be time for a deep evaluation of your situation. It is the time for a new direction to manifest. Health, relationships and resources are the main topics and you may experience a windfall or increase of sorts.

**Mac McLaughlin** has been a practising, professional astrologer for more than four decades. His popular **Straight Stars** column ran in Vancouver's largest weekly newspaper for 11 years. Email [mac@macsstars.com](mailto:mac@macsstars.com) or call 604-731-1109

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# Earth Day

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## Events

### Wildlife Rescue Association of BC Earth Fest

**April 11: 11am-3pm**

A family day of free activities, including birdhouse and bee box building, nature trails and games. Learn more about local wildlife, pick-up green living tips from the experts. Burnaby Lake Pavillion, 6871 Roberts St., Burnaby. [www.wildliferescue.ca](http://www.wildliferescue.ca)

### Earth Day celebration with Evergreen BC

**April 16: 11am-4pm**

Jericho Beach Park, W. 2nd Ave., Vancouver. Exhibitor's fair, native plant sale and hands-on restoration and planting efforts with the Jericho Stewardship Group and Evergreen. Come get your hands dirty and connect with local organizations that make Earth Day every day!

### Earth Day parade

**April 22: 11am**

Organized by Youth for Climate Justice and the Wilderness Committee. The most fun you ever had saving the planet! March with your signs starting at Broadway Skytrain. Parade up Commercial Street to Britannia Field. Everyone welcome. Entertainment, family-friendly activities, music and information booths. [www.earthdayparade.ca](http://www.earthdayparade.ca)

### The Green Grouch

The Greenest Canadian City Challenge runs until April 22, 2012. It involves 50 cities nationwide and eight cities in BC. Get green points for using a refillable cup, reusable cloth grocery/shopping bag, going meatless on Mondays, checking car tire pressure, etc. Takes a minute once a week to check a 10-point list. Support your city. [www.thegreengrouch.com](http://www.thegreengrouch.com)

## These environmental issues are worth revisiting...



## Alberta Tar Sands

A thin border separates the Boreal Forest from an open-pit mine. Clear cutting and deforestation in Alberta's Tar Sands region releases, on average, 8.7 megatonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere on a yearly basis. Photo © Greenpeace / John Woods <http://photo.greenpeace.org>

Jason Hjalmarson, Greenpeace Canada

**W**e know unequivocally that Earth's climate is changing. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) tells us that the global surface temperature has already increased by .7 °C. NASA says that 2010 tied with 2005 as the hottest year on record. Increased temperatures mean melting polar ice caps and less sea ice. The melting of Greenland's ice sheet could cause the world's sea levels to increase by 23 feet.

In 2009, the Global Humanitarian Forum, an organization headed by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, released a report that found climate change already causes more than 300,000 deaths per year and has displaced 26 million people. "Climate Change is the greatest humanitarian challenge facing mankind today," Annan said.

We know with an equal amount of certainty what is causing these changes: we, the human race, are releasing massive quantities of toxic greenhouse gases (GHGs) into the atmosphere. We are so certain of this fact that many of the world's governments have already taken action to avert catastrophe. But here in Canada, despite the fact the federal [As of our press date, we still have a Conservative federal government] government has spent over \$7 billion on various programs aimed at reducing emissions, we are responsible for the largest increase of GHGs of any industrialized country on Earth, thanks in large part to the Alberta Tar Sands, the largest industrial project on the planet.

This is the reality. In order to best preserve the planet for our children, we must act globally to reduce GHG emissions. There is no future for the *continued p.42...*



# Closing the Northern Gateway on Enbridge

Nikki Skuce, senior energy campaigner, ForestEthics

In January of this year, I attended a presentation in Vancouver by a woman named Beth from Battle Creek, Michigan. This was the second time I had heard her speak. As Beth showed slides of Enbridge's massive oil spill in Michigan's Kalamazoo River last July, the threat of a spill in the Fraser or Skeena watersheds became all the more real. You will recall Enbridge is the same company that wants to build the Northern Gateway pipeline across more than 1,000 rivers and streams, from Alberta to Kitimat, BC.

Beth talked about how Enbridge was slow to react to the spill. There was a high volume of 911 calls because of the stench of gas, but it took Enbridge more than 18 hours to report the oil spill. Residents soon discovered four million litres of Tar Sands oil had spilled into a creek that flows into the Kalamazoo River. Within days, a state of emergency was declared, as oil coated 40 miles of river and shorelines, saturated wetlands and put residents at risk from exposure to benzene's carcinogenic effects.

Initially, Enbridge claimed full responsibility for the spill, with CEO Pat Daniel solemnly pledging, in front of TV cameras, the company would "help the families involved." Then in a startling about-face, Enbridge hired a law firm to challenge the claims once media attention subsided. And Enbridge expects us to trust its promises with regard to its high-risk Northern Gateway project?


Enbridge has admitted it can't promise there will be no

spills, but the company tries to minimize the risks by touting technology and safety. Its massive oil spill in Michigan – and oil spills every week across all of its pipelines – reveals its promises are as toxic as the oil it transports.

What really struck me about Beth's slides was a photo of a wetland covered in oil. And the high-tech mechanism Enbridge was using to prevent wildlife from entering this area turned out to be a plastic owl on a stick. A plastic owl on a stick? Is this the kind of oil spill clean-up and management we can expect?

As Beth looked around at the beautiful BC mountain view before heading out, she turned to me and sighed, saying she wouldn't trust Enbridge to build pipelines safely in this dramatic Northern landscape. And we don't.

Opposition to the Enbridge BC pipeline project that would introduce more than 225 oil tankers to BC's north coast is strong and growing. Over 70 First Nations, a majority of BC municipalities and all Federal opposition parties have declared to support a tanker ban to stop the project. A tanker ban will not only prevent Enbridge's project from going ahead but it will also prevent similar threats, such as CN's "Pipeline on Rails" proposal.

All British Columbians need to ask their MP or their election candidates where they stand on the tanker ban. We must all vote for the coast. 

[www.forestethics.org](http://www.forestethics.org)

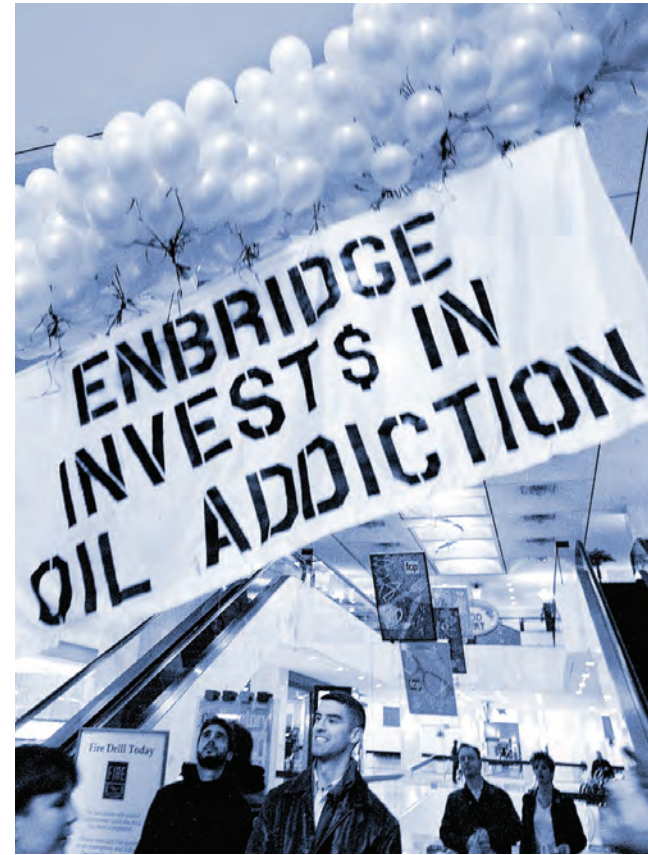


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## People power can save BC's wild rivers

Joe Foy, national campaign director, Wilderness Committee

I love donuts, but I wrote this article at home because I was worried it might be too hard to get a seat at my local Tim Hortons. That's because on some days our hospital in New Westminster is so overcrowded the coffee shop doubles as an emergency ward. Such are the cash-strapped times we live in.

Meanwhile, the BC government continues to shovel money out the back of a dump truck to their friends in the private hydropower industry to dam and divert our province's wild rivers. Our Liberal government's generosity comes in the form of long-term energy purchase contracts granted to the private power companies at rates far above market rates for electrical energy BC doesn't need and that we can only sell at a loss.

Does this sound like a recipe for disaster for folks like you and me? You bet it is. Just ask the guy in the bed next to you in line at your favourite donut shop.

People across the province are beginning to catch on to how badly they've been hosed by Victoria's river privatization policies. A recent headline in Whistler's *Pique* magazine reads, "IPP's [Independent Power Producers] to cost BC Hydro almost \$1 billion annually by 2014." A billion dollars is a big bite out of the

province's healthcare budget. The line up at Timmy's is about to get longer.

How did we get into this mess?

It all goes back to 2002 when then new Premier Campbell brought in the so-called Clean Energy Act. This law forces BC Hydro to buy unneeded electrical power at exorbitant prices in long-term, multi-decade contracts from the private power guys. Predictably, it sparked a gold rush on BC's wild rivers. Today, BC Hydro is on the hook for about \$30 billion dollars in long-term energy purchase contracts and over 800 rivers and streams are staked across the province. Yikes!

How do we get out of this mess? People power! This past year, people from many communities and walks of life, standing together, have stopped some pretty big private hydro projects dead in their tracks.

The Klinaklini River project would have required a three-story diversion tunnel carved through a mountain for 17 kilometres and would have backed up the river into a protected area. Thankfully, as a result of public opposition, the BC government pulled the plug on this nightmare project.


The proposed project on Glacier and Howser Creeks



People across the province are beginning to catch on to how badly they've been hosed by Victoria's river privatization policies.

in the Kootenays pretty much sank this year under a tidal wave of public opposition and news the project would have toasted endangered bull trout habitat.

And then there was the biggest of them all, General Electric's humungous Bute Inlet project, which aimed to dam and divert 17 rivers. GE's behemoth has been stalled, thanks to a relentless campaign by thousands of people working to save the area's world-renowned salmon and grizzly populations.

So that's the good news; if we raise our voices together, we can save BC's wild rivers and public power system. 

For more information, see [http://wildernesscommittee.org/sites/all/files/publications/2011\\_rivers\\_newspaper-web-2.pdf](http://wildernesscommittee.org/sites/all/files/publications/2011_rivers_newspaper-web-2.pdf)



# The Great Turning

**T**he Great Turning is the name for the essential adventure of our time: the shift from a society based on industrial growth to a life-sustaining civilization.

The ecological and social crises we face are inflamed by an economic system dependent on accelerating growth. This self-destructing political economy sets its goals and measures its performance in terms of ever-increasing corporate profits; in other words, by how fast materials can be extracted from Earth and turned into consumer products, weapons and waste.

A revolution is underway because people are realizing we can meet our needs without destroying our world. We have the technical knowledge, communication tools and material resources to grow enough food, ensure clean air and water and meet rational energy needs. Future generations, if there is a liveable world for them, will look back at this epochal transition we are making now to a life-sustaining society. They may well call this the time of The Great Turning.

It is happening now and whether or not it is recognized by corporate-controlled media, it is a reality. Although we can't yet know if it will take hold in time for humans and other complex life forms to survive, we do know it is gaining momentum, through the actions of countless individuals and groups around the world. To see this as the larger context of our lives clears our vision and summons our courage.

On April 30, upwards of 40 community leaders and change agents are speaking with hundreds of activated citizens in Vancouver. It's a gathering of evolutionaries committed to creating a future they can believe in. There are three dimensions of The Great Turning: action, innovation and consciousness. Speakers will address specific issues within each. The Great Turning is inspired by the wisdom of eco-philosopher Joanna Macy, a general systems theorist, scholar of Buddhism, teacher of deep ecology and long-time activist in the movements for peace, justice and ecology.

## Actions to halt damage to Earth and slow down the waste of our precious resources

Perhaps the most visible dimension of The Great Turning, these activities include all the political and legal work required to reduce the destruction, as well as direct actions: public rallies, boycotts and other forms



**The ecological and social crises we face are inflamed by an economic system dependent on accelerating growth. This self-destructing political economy sets its goals and measures its performance in terms of ever-increasing corporate profits.**

of refusal. Work of this kind buys time. It saves ecosystems, species, cultures and some of the gene pool for the sustainable society to come. But on its own, it is insufficient to bring that society about.

## Innovation – analysis of structural causes and the creation of alternatives

The second dimension of The Great Turning is equally crucial. To free ourselves and our planet from the damage inflicted by the industrial growth society,

we must understand its dynamics. What are the tacit agreements that create obscene wealth for a few while progressively impoverishing the rest of humanity? What are the interlocking causes that indenture us to an insatiable economy that uses our Earth as a supply house and sewer? It is not a pretty picture and it takes courage and confidence in our own common sense to look at it with realism, but we are demystifying the workings of the global economy. We can then see its fragility, how dependent it is on our obedience and how we can withdraw our support.

Speakers at The Great Turning are offering creative structural alternatives. Like green shoots pushing up through the rubble, new social and economic arrangements are sprouting. Not waiting for our national or provincial politicians to catch up with us, we are banding together and taking action in our own community. Flowing from our creativity and collaboration on

behalf of life, these actions may look marginal, but they hold the seeds for the future.

## Shift in consciousness

These structural alternatives cannot take root and survive without deeply ingrained values to sustain them. They must mirror what we want and how we relate to Earth and each other. They require a profound shift in our perception of reality and that shift is happening now, both as cognitive revolution and spiritual awakening.

The insights and experiences that enable us to make this shift are accelerating and they take many forms. The realizations we make in the third dimension of The Great Turning save us from succumbing to either panic or paralysis. They help us resist the temptation to stick our heads in the sand or to turn on each other as scapegoats upon whom we can vent our fear and rage.

The Great Turning is a profound call to awaken and arise, to bring our lives into alignment with our values and to be aware and purposeful with every choice we make. May we choose well.

**Maureen Jack-LaCroix** is the founding director of Be the Change Earth Alliance and producer of The Great Turning: an Unconference to Be the Change, Saturday, April 30, Maritime Labour Centre, 1880 Triumph St., Vancouver. Order tickets at [www.bethechangeearthalliance.org](http://www.bethechangeearthalliance.org) or call 604-269-9874.



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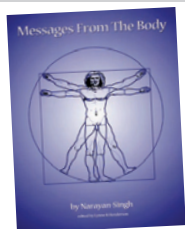


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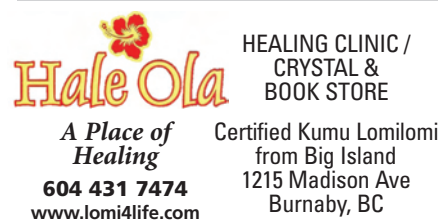
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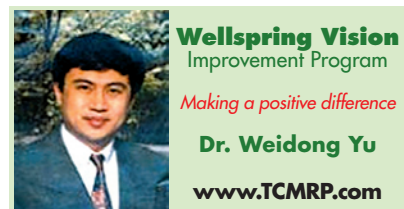
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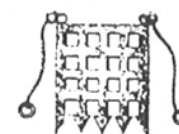


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**- Anatole France**



# Government sees no need to test GMOs

**B**ill-C474, a concrete proposal to solve one of the major problems created by genetically modified crops (GM or GE) was rejected by Members of Parliament. After a full year of debate that included Parliamentary hearings, the Bill was voted down on February 9 by both Liberals and Conservatives. Although the Bill itself was lost, it sparked the first real debate in Parliament over genetic modification and led directly to a motion for a moratorium on GM alfalfa.

Bill C-474 exposed the economic harm that some GM crops can cause farmers. The Bill would have required “an analysis of potential harm to export markets be conducted before the sale of any new genetically engineered seed is permitted.” The one-line Bill narrowed in on the problem that GM crops may be approved in Canada even if they are not approved in our export markets, often resulting in costly market rejection. It shone a light on the reality of GM contamination of non-GM crops and the fact that it is the farmers, not biotech companies, who pay the price.

Bill C-474 was introduced by NDP Agriculture Critic Alex Atamanenko and was supported by the NDP and Bloc Quebecois, with both Party leaders voting in favour of it. The Conservative Party was solidly opposed to the Bill and although two BC Conservative MPs voted to allow the Bill to be debated by the Agriculture Committee, no Conservative voted for the Bill to become regulation. The Conservative Party remained unyielding in its opposition to Bill C-474, echoing industry rhetoric that the Bill would create red tape and put a chill on innovation. In the House of Commons, Minister of Agriculture Gerry Ritz called the Bill “an ideological stance that is basically non-GM, non-trade.”

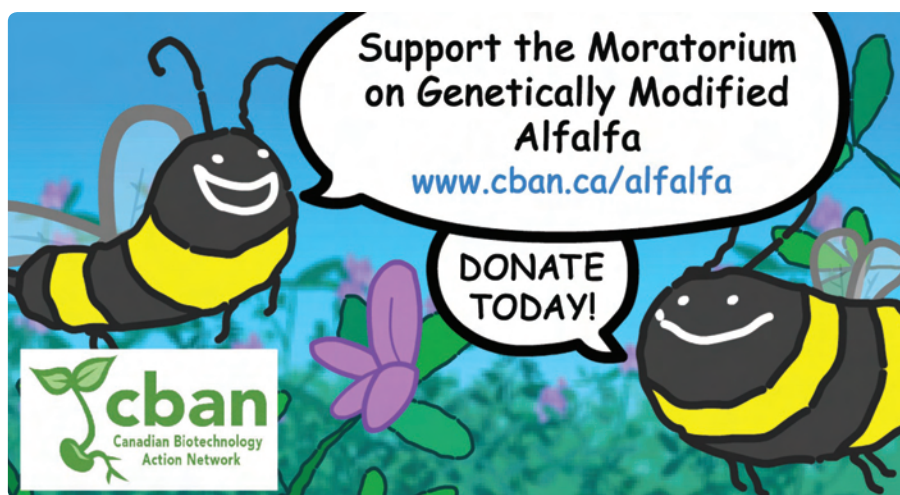
After 15 years of experience with GM corn, canola, soy and flax, there is enough evidence to show that each new GM crop may, at the very least, have a specific negative impact on markets for certain farmers. For example, organic grain farmers in Canada lost canola due to GM contamination while flax farmers are still testing to eliminate unexpected GM contamination from 2009. As Colleen Ross, vice-president of the National Farmers Union said, “Our government has been supporting genetic engineering at any cost.

But we refuse to accept their willingness to sacrifice some farmers and some crops for the sake of the biotech industry.”

The industry association CropLife, representing

Monsanto and other biotech and pesticide companies, told MP Alex Atamanenko it did not want Bill C-474 debated in the House of Commons Agriculture Committee. Despite the heavy corporate lobby to prevent the debate from happening in the first place, Committee hearings on Bill C-474 began in early 2010 and ultimately led to Committee hearings on biotechnology. This was a major victory for critics of GM.

Every industry attempt to prevent and shut down the



## The Conservative Party remained unyielding in their opposition to Bill C-474.

debate on the Bill was defied. That the debate happened at all was due to the tens of thousands of Canadians who mobilized to support the Bill. The strength of the public response, including the response from farmer organizations, has changed the debate over GM.

On January 27, following protracted legal cases, the US Department of Agriculture approved plantings of Monsanto's herbicide tolerant GM alfalfa, despite widespread opposition from farmers and consumers. Canada is only one step away from allowing GM alfalfa to be planted here, despite the fact that both conventional and organic farmers agree that crop contamination by GM alfalfa is an urgent threat.

Liberal Agriculture Critic Wayne Easter has now proposed a motion for a moratorium on GM alfalfa, catching up to the NDP and Bloc Quebecois who support the motion and have long advocated for action. This Liberal motion is a major step forward, though


the true test of Liberal commitment is yet to come.

Conservatives now also agree that GM alfalfa is a problem even as they actively block action. While he delayed a vote on the motion at a Committee meeting on March 10, Conservative Saskatchewan MP Randy Hoback stated, “The concern I have isn't necessarily with the motion itself... When I go to my farmers in my area – we have a lot of alfalfa production – they're concerned about Roundup Ready alfalfa... I don't want to defend it [GM alfalfa].”

About his motion for a moratorium on GM alfalfa, Easter said, “The federal government should ensure that the relevant questions and concerns are addressed prior to approval – not afterwards, as was done in the United States.” This description applies not just to GM alfalfa, however, but to the whole system that approves GM crops.

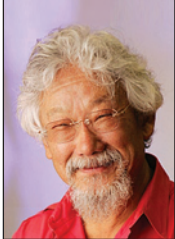
Ritz recently told the *Western Producer* newspaper, “We look at a number of factors including net benefit and so forth but having said that, there has been no demand for it [on GM alfalfa] so we have no intention of moving forward.” The Minister

and other Conservatives are attempting to allay the fears of farmers and consumers over GM alfalfa being introduced soon, but it is just a ploy to deflect intense public pressure. And their statements are incorrect. Current regulation does not include looking into “benefits and so forth,” something Bill C-474 tried in part to address. Additionally, when they opposed Bill C-474, Conservatives slammed the idea of considering economic impacts or other considerations that are not “science based.”

Unless the Minister of Agriculture is prepared to take action, Monsanto will move forward with GM alfalfa regardless of what Ritz says his intentions are. With GM alfalfa and now with GM pork and GM salmon on the horizon, time is running out for a political solution. While all political parties are scrambling to propose a national food policy, they should understand their careful work to court votes from the new food movement in Canada will be swiftly undone if they will not deal with this problem of GM crops and animals. The controversy over Bill C-474 educated Parliamentarians about genetic engineering and exposed them to consumer and farmer concerns. With continued and increasing public action, this unprecedented political opportunity should lead to concrete, fundamental change. 

**Lucy Sharratt** is the Coordinator for the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network. [www.cban.ca](http://www.cban.ca)





# Campbell's Legacy

One of Canada's longest-serving politicians, Gordon Campbell, recently stepped down as leader of the BC Liberal Party and premier of British Columbia. Mr. Campbell's long tenure as premier was fraught with contradictions when it came to the environment.

He brought in an ambitious plan to tackle climate change, including mandatory targets for reducing greenhouse gases, a more energy-efficient building code and North America's strongest carbon tax, for which he received widespread support from many climate scientists, environmentalists and economists.

Despite BC's leadership on the carbon tax, Premier Campbell's government also committed more than \$1 billion in subsidies to oil and gas companies and aggressively pushed mega-energy projects that are at odds with the need to shift BC from costly and environmentally damaging forms of energy to low-impact, renewable power generation.

Perhaps no mega-energy plan has generated as much controversy as resurrecting the dam proposal for Site C on the Peace River. During his last few months as premier, Mr. Campbell announced the government will move ahead with the assessment stage for the massive \$6.6 billion hydroelectric dam, near the town of Fort St. John in northeast BC.


This dam would be the third major hydro development on one of BC's most picturesque waterways. The Peace River flows for about 2,000 kilometres from the Rocky Mountain alpine in the west, then northeast across Alberta, eventually joining the Athabasca-Mackenzie watershed on its way to the Arctic Ocean. The dam would flood the highly productive lower Peace Valley. Because of its fertile soils, moderate climate and accessible terrain, the bottomlands along its banks and gentle valley slopes have supported farming families for more than a century.

Premier Campbell announced his plans at a news conference in front of an earlier hydro-development project, the W.A.C. Bennett Dam, a few kilometres upstream from the Site C dam location. With the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and its massive reservoir as his backdrop, the premier argued the proposed Site C dam would provide a clean and renewable source of energy. But to First Nations and other local people whose traditional lands and farms were flooded and livelihoods destroyed by the W.A.C. Bennett Dam in the 1960s, the prospect of yet another dam that will flood long sections of the Peace River Valley, destroying farms and forest, is unacceptable.

The 60-metre-tall Site C dam is designed to produce 900 megawatts a year, enough electricity to power 400,000 homes. Although it will generate power with a far lower greenhouse gas footprint than an energy source such as coal, the project, according to opponents, is not needed to meet BC's energy demands and will result in unacceptably high ecological and social costs.

In September, First Nations elders, youth and elected officials, along with non-native farmers and ranchers, travelled 1,300 kilometres from the Peace Valley to Victoria to present the premier with a historic declaration opposing the dam. The document was signed by 23 First Nations from across BC, Alberta and the Northwest Territories.

The declaration was wrapped in a traditional birch bark container, from trees growing in the flood zone of the proposed dam. And while neither Premier Campbell nor anyone from his government would meet with the delegation to accept their declaration, it was later formally introduced into the legislature by the NDP opposition.

Premier Campbell leaves office with a growing movement against the dam that he championed. Many British Columbians believe the environmental costs associated with big hydro are just too high and that the next premier of BC must make lower-impact renewable energy sources — like solar, wind, geothermal and other technologies — the basis of our energy future. 

Written with contributions from Faisal Moola, director of the Terrestrial Conservation and Science Program, David Suzuki Foundation.

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Father and son from *Winter in Wartime*. Courtesy mongrelmedia.com

Growing up is painful enough. Growing up during a war really hurts. That's the thrust of rites-of-passage drama *Winter in Wartime* (*Oorlogswinter*), a WW2 Dutch occupation film seen through the eyes of a 13-year-old.

Headstrong, rebellious and impressionable Michiel (Martijn Lake-meier, providing good screen presence) grabs the opportunity of his lifetime when he stumbles upon Jack, a downed RAF pilot (Jamie Campbell Bower of *Sweeney Todd*) in a snowy hideout in the woods. At risk of being shot, Michiel aids the wounded Jack and plans his escape.

Newfound responsibility forces Michiel to reassess his own instincts. In particular, he slowly recognizes the quiet heroism of his father, the town mayor, after initially being contemptuous of his diplomatic approach to the military occupiers. Michiel also learns firsthand not all Germans are despicable, even if he has plenty of reasons to hate them.

Martin Koolhoven's film is beautifully shot, with atmospheric period detail, but it pushes credibility to the limits as it ventures into action flick territory later in the film. But while the twisty plot wears thin by the end, the central theme of the boy's yearnings for manhood is touching.

Reel 2 Real International Film Festival for Youth (April 9-15) also turns 13 this

## Coming-of-age stories

year. "To help us celebrate, the focus will be on films about how this important rite of passage is observed around the world," notes executive director Venay Felton. The festival opens with *The First Movie*, a documentary that explores the power of cinema for children in the small, frontier village of Goptapa in the Kurdish region of northern Iraq. Gassed in 1988 by Saddam Hussein, the village is steeped in the culture of conflict. Respected critic and curator Mark Cousins introduces the children to films for the first time and then sets them off with video cameras to make their own works, revealing the vitality of their imaginations.

Other R2R films include *7, or Why I Exist*, a documentary in which children talk about their world, aspirations, dreams and beliefs and *White Lion*, a coming-of-age, nature drama featuring the South African equivalent to BC's "Spirit Bear."

Dutch fantasy *Eep!* features a girl who has wings instead of arms and the Quebecois film *Aurélien Laflamme's Diary* is about a young girl who suspects she is an alien. As well as animation, shorts and workshops, the festival offers *The Crocodiles Strike Back*, the sequel to last year's R2R award winner. It closes with an encore screening of *Boy*, a film about magic, heroes and Michael Jackson.

For adults, *Certified Copy* (out now) is an intriguing puzzle, teasing one with ideas about the value of original art and the authenticity and transience of human experience. Juliette Binoche gives a mesmerizing performance as Elle, an antique dealer and single mom, in a passionate counter-point to the jaded, professorial author James (William Shimell), as they meander together one day through rural Tuscany discussing art, love and life. Director Abbas Kiarostami's first foray outside his native Iran has echoes of Edward Albee's similarly dialogue-heavy *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* which also featured a *tour de force* performance by the late Elizabeth Taylor. However, *Certified Copy*'s warm Italian setting, playful thematic undertow and fluid cinematic language makes it a light-hearted, albeit inconclusive, exercise. **K**

**Robert Alstead** made the Vancouver documentary **You Never Bike Alone** [www.youneverbikealone.com](http://www.youneverbikealone.com). He writes at [www.2020Vancouver.com](http://www.2020Vancouver.com)

## Burzynski: the Movie

Cancer is serious business

by C.A. Wolski

In *Burzynski: the Movie*, director Eric Merola details the eponymous doctor's ongoing struggles to treat his patients with his anticancer drug antineoplaston A10, which could end the need for chemotherapy and radiation for many forms of cancer.

Director Merola obviously supports Dr. Burzynski and his film clearly falls into the category of advocacy documentary. Of course, we have seen a plethora of advocacy documentaries over the past decade – notably from Michael Moore and Morgan Spurlock. They are usually cheeky takes on important issues and are more focused on entertainment. But the biggest problem with these recent attempts at advocacy documentary (one of the oldest genres of nonfiction film) is that the filmmakers involved generally proceed to trash their opponents without having first proven their own positions.

*Burzynski, the Movie*, however, is the model of what advocacy documentary should be. Merola spends the first 30 minutes of the film laying out his case for the effectiveness of Burzynski's treatment, presenting powerful testimony, including archival footage from US congressional hearings about how antineoplastons have saved individual patients, many of them children. One of the most powerful stories is that of a 24-year-old mother of two who, at age 11, was spared radiation therapy that would have left her



deaf, infertile, and in a vegetative state and, at best, with only a few months to live. In archival footage, we see the almost immediate, seemingly miraculous effect of antineoplastons on the young patient. More than a decade later, we see her as a vibrant, healthy, cancer-free mother.

The remaining two-thirds of the film chronicles how a courageous, brilliant doctor is unjustly persecuted by a government with a vested interest in protecting the status quo because of the enormous fees paid by big pharmaceutical companies to "fast-track" approval of their drugs.

Merola's case is measured, balanced and relentlessly clear. If you walk away from this without being convinced that Dr. Burzynski's technique is at least worth researching, you probably have not been paying attention. This is a testament to Merola's clear approach and shows that a well-done advocacy documentary can effectively make a case for a cause without asking audiences to suspend their own judgment. **K**

Excerpted and reprinted with permission from reviewer **C.A. Wolski**. Originally published in *The Objective Standard*, winter 2010–2011. The DVD is available for purchase at [www.burzynskimovie.com](http://www.burzynskimovie.com) (Ships worldwide.) According to the director, Netflix has yet to agree to carry the film for rental, but will if a suitable number of Netflix customers "save" the film in their queues.





Independent Media Steve Anderson

# You, me & the Minister

In the past, I've asked Canadians to send Industry Minister Tony Clement letters asking him to stop Internet Service Providers (ISPs) from discriminating against online services. Currently, several major ISPs are engaging in the practice of discrimination by making certain services load slower for users than other services. After I asked Canadians to once again urge the Minister into action, I was expecting the usual government form letter response.

But I was wrong. This time, Clement invited me to meet with him. Clearly, the nearly half a million signatures on the "Stop the Meter" petition have made him a little nervous.

Clement deserves credit for initiating a meeting with me, considering that I, and OpenMedia.ca, have been very critical of him for several years now. This demonstrates he is willing to listen to Canadians when the volume is loud enough.

Yet while Clement is willing to listen, it seems he's not so willing to act. For the most part, Clement put forth what I'd define as a "wait-and-see" digital policy agenda during our meeting.


While Clement was clear he would make structural changes to the telecom industry in his upcoming digital economy strategy policy, this is obviously a rather vague commitment and it could be delayed because of an election.

Clement outright refused to deal with issues like ISP oversight and transparency or reforms to the CRTC, Canada's communications regulator. It's clear we can no longer trust ISPs now that they are gouging us and limiting access to online services. After falling asleep at the wheel and letting this happen, the CRTC must be reformed.

Canadians have waited long enough and felt the impact on their wallets time and again as a result of this "wait-and-see" approach. In fact, Canadians across the country are currently battling with phone companies over excessive data and phone fees. CBC's Marketplace just released a revealing report called "Canada's Worst Cell Phone Bill," which finds damning evidence that Canadians are being unfairly gouged by cell phone providers. One person was charged over \$15,000 for a data service that an expert interviewed by the CBC said only cost the provider four dollars.

This is the pricing model big phone and cable companies are in the process of imposing on the wired Internet access we enjoy in our homes and workplaces. The move to put a pay meter on our Internet use is designed to limit our access to online video services and content while lining the pockets of huge telecom conglomerates. But this is not just about consumer choice; it's also about basic human dignity and self-determination. The "Stop The Meter" petition has become a rallying cry because the telecom companies have become so arrogant, insulated and unaccountable they are now violating basic human values.

Canadians are looking for a champion of the Open Internet, or, at the very least, someone to exhibit strong leadership in digital policy. Unfortunately, at the moment, Tony Clement is not that person. Clement has had ample opportunity to be clear and forthcoming in his stance on digital policy, but he has continuously failed to face Canada's digital issues head on.

So if we want Clement or any other representative to prevent phone and cable companies from price gouging and taking over the Internet, it appears we will be left to our own devices; increasing our numbers and building the pro-Internet movement is one major step we can take to force him to act in the future. Thus, once again, leadership will need to start with us, the Internet users. 

**Steve Anderson** is the national coordinator for OpenMedia.ca. He has written for The Tyee, Toronto Star, Epoch Times and Adbusters.

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## Talks/Booksignings at Banyen

### • Kevin Annett Unrepentant—

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Indian Residential Schools*



**April 7**

### • Lisa Schroder

*Adobe Homes for All Climates  
Even in the BC Rainforest*

**April 14**

### • Lynne McTaggart

*The Bond—Connecting Through  
the Space Between Us*

**May 1**

(workshop info: [www.sciencetosage.ca](http://www.sciencetosage.ca))

## Other Events at Banyen

### • Crystal Bowl Demonstration

with

Valerie  
Bates

**April 10**

11:30-  
1:30



Full events info @ [banyen.com](http://banyen.com)

# Datebook

For rates & placements email [datebook@commonground.ca](mailto:datebook@commonground.ca)

## APR 1

**Introduction to Foot Reflexology** commences Certificate Weekend Training Course. Introduction 7.30PM, \$10; Course \$395. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818, [www.pacificreflexology.com](http://www.pacificreflexology.com)

## APR 8 & APR 9 & 10

**Apr 8: 7-9PM, free demo** of effective pain elimination. See the Yuen Method Work on the Spot. With Colette Stefan. White Rock, Whitby's Books. 1-888-536-3713. **Apr 9-10: Level 2 Class**, \$525 incl. tax. Sheraton Guilford Hotel, Surrey. [www.crystallinevision.com](http://www.crystallinevision.com) colette@crystallinevision.com 1-306-584-9135.

## APR 9

**"Realizing your Closeness to God."** Free talk, Christian Science healer Suzanne Riedel, 11AM. Experience God's presence in your life, bringing healing. Canadian Memorial Centre for Peace, 1825 West 16th at Burrard, 604-733-4310.

## APR 9 & 23, May 7 & 21

**Mantra Meditation** Bhagavad-gita, Vegetarian

Snacks, Unity Yoga, 10th Ave @ Commercial Drive, 6-8:30pm. By Donation, [enchant108@gmail.com](mailto:enchant108@gmail.com)

## APR 11

**Breakthrough Energy Forum:** talks on clean future power from magnetism, water, zero-point energy. Theatre A122a, Langara College, 100 W. 49th Ave. \$5. [www.changingpower.net](http://www.changingpower.net); [www.NewEnergyMovement.ca](http://www.NewEnergyMovement.ca) 604-754-6155.

## APR 17

**A Highpoint of the Year:** Easter Full Moon. Join us for Transmission Meditation. FREE. 2:30-4:30pm, Roundhouse Community Centre (Pacific @ Davie). 604.983.0926.

## APR 17

**J.Krishnamurti:** Exploring the Essence of Love Thought & Disorder DVD & Dialogue Series, 4PM. Planetarium. \$5. 778-330-6639.

## APR 22- 24

**Laughter Yoga Certification:** Be a Laughter Leader and fill your life with laughter and fun. No yoga experience necessary. [www.thesmilingyogi.com/laughter/](http://www.thesmilingyogi.com/laughter/) 604-267-2789.

## APR 28

**Fill Your Workshops With Ease:** Avoid the 3 massive mistakes workshop leaders make. Presented by Callan Rush. 7-10PM. Tickets free when you pre-register. In Vancouver. Call Katie at 1-888-686-7409.

## APR 30

**The Great Turning:** a dynamic unconference with 40 community leaders focused on Eco-Action, Innovation and Consciousness in dialogue with 400 change agents like you! 9am-5:30pm, Maritime Labour Centre. [www.bethechangeEarthAlliance.org](http://www.bethechangeEarthAlliance.org)

## APR 30

**The Quickening:** A Cosmic Journey through the 4 Paths of Transformation with Pepe Danza, Shine, Jackie Essombe, Zamir Dhanji, Buckman Coe, Desiduous and more. Doors 8pm, Show 8:30pm. Dance until 1am, Maritime Labour Centre. [www.bethechangeEarthAlliance.org](http://www.bethechangeEarthAlliance.org)

## MAY 6-8

**"Food Is Not The Problem-Deal With What Is"** Transformative Weekend Workshop: Finally! True Freedom From Food and Weight Stress. [www.cedriccentre.com/weekend-workshops](http://www.cedriccentre.com/weekend-workshops) (866) 383-0797.

## MAY 6-8

**Introduction to Foot Reflexology** commences Certificate Weekend Training Course. Introduction 7.30 pm \$10; Course \$395. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818, [www.pacificreflexology.com](http://www.pacificreflexology.com)

## MAY 7 & JUN 5

**Adam Dreamhealer's Workshops** - Toronto: May 7; Calgary: June 5. Experience unique group energy healings with Adam, international speaker, Molecular Biologist, author and First Nations Healer. Learn techniques to focus intentions embracing self-empowerment and your own healing power... It's transformational! All registration: [www.dreamhealer.com](http://www.dreamhealer.com)

## MAY 7

**Japan Relief Music Fest** South Delta Fundraiser: 2pm-Midnight. Tsawwassen Legion 22 -1835 56th Street Delta. Info: 604-943-0232.

## May 13-15

**"The Journey of Awakening"** retreat on the spiritual quest, with some of today's leading spiritual teachings & pointers; [www.swanwickcentre.ca](http://www.swanwickcentre.ca) / 250-744-3354 (Victoria).

## MAY 19

**Experience a Power Animal Drum Journey.** Free info evening hosted by the Institute of Shamanic Medicine. 7:30pm, Vancouver. RSVP early; space is limited: RSVP: [info@shamanicmedicine.ca](mailto:info@shamanicmedicine.ca) 1-877-329-8668. [www.shamanicmedicine.ca](http://www.shamanicmedicine.ca)

## May 27-29

**Family Constellation Retreat:** Heal destructive familial patterns. For more information: [www.wisteriaacres.com](http://www.wisteriaacres.com) 604-807-2255.

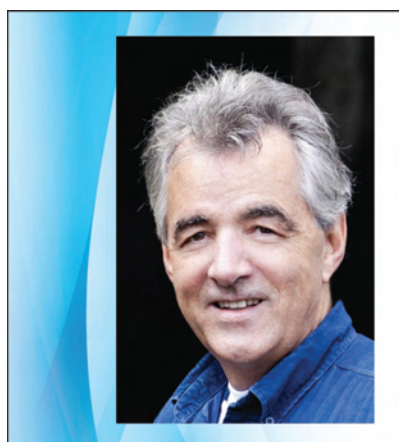
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**Water for Life** Benefit Concert: 7:30PM, Michael J. Fox Theatre, Burnaby. Featuring stories by Mark Angelo and music by Holly Arntzen, Kevin Wright & their dream band.

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1-855-985-5000 [www.waterforlive2011.com](http://www.waterforlive2011.com)

## SATURDAYS

**Enlightened Master** Paramahansa Nithyananda Live webcasts from India, April 9 & 10, Sat/Sun 8am-6pm. eN Wealth Creation and Management Workshop. Learn how to: Attract wealth effortlessly, Make clear financial decisions, Negotiate for success. A Unique Kundalini Awakening Process, Discourse & Meditation Saturdays 7-9:30pm. Apr 9: "Wealth Consciousness." Apr 16: "How to be an Exceptional Leader." Apr 23: "You can Shift in Consciousness on the Planet." Registration/More info: [lifelblissvancouver@gmail.com](mailto:lifelblissvancouver@gmail.com)

## SUNDAYS

**Centre for Spiritual Living:** Join us every Sunday @ 9:15 AM & 11 AM for practical spirituality with great music. Meditation: 10:15 AM. 1880 Triumph Street, Suite 8 (at Victoria Drive), Vancouver. Info: 604-321-1225, [www.cslvancouver.com](http://www.cslvancouver.com)

**SOS (Science of Spirituality):** See Resource Directory listing in Spiritual Practices for schedule in Richmond, Vancouver & Victoria. 604-277-1247. All Welcome. [www.sos.org](http://www.sos.org)

## TUESDAYS

**Potluck Event & Garden Party!** Join us at 7pm the first Tues. of every Month for an organic, home-made potluck dinner. Bring something creative & enjoy our community garden in the parking lot. Ethical Kitchen, 1600 McKay Rd., North Van. 604-988-6280. [www.westonaprice.org](http://www.westonaprice.org)

**Reflexology Student Clinic** 6-10pm. One-hour sessions \$20. By appointment only. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818. [www.pacificreflexology.com](http://www.pacificreflexology.com)

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## RETREATS

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# Autumn Skye Morrison

## Artist Statement

**M**y purpose is to create. In that process, I find stillness and rhythm, my teacher and passion. I believe that art can be a life-shaking experience or an intimate rendezvous. For me, it is both. I paint in celebration of this fantastic adventure.

I start with fragments of ideas and work intuitively, not clinging to a preconceived outcome or a completed concept. When painting, I use a wide variety of mixed media to further enhance my work through texture and dimension. Texture, colour and mixed media bring the image into our physical space, creating an interactive and sensory experience.

I place intention into what I create. Whether it is through words, actions, thoughts or artwork, I aim to share honesty and awakening. To celebrate this fantastic adventure. To inspire and be inspired.

I believe that art can be an intimate rendezvous. My



*"Beyond The Surface"*  
70"x30", acrylic and china cup, 2007-8



*"The Grace of Mer"*  
30"x36", acrylic and mixed media, 2010

intent is to reveal a symbiotic relationship between artist, muse and viewer. Through an exploration of "being woman" and "being human," I express my journey and my highest realization of who we are, through the language of paint. In a shifting, and challenging world and time, I aim to inspire those around me to see light in the Now, and in the present and future.

I begin with planting seeds of ideas and intuitively progress through the piece. Each canvas takes me on a



*"Harmonic Transformation"*  
48"x24", acrylic on canvas, 2011

journey, and as my paintbrush follows, I am led back to my centre each time. I am constantly surprised and inspired by what is translated through my imagination and brush strokes.

As I paint, I trust the process, and while holding true to anatomy, lighting, dimensions and technical discipline, I try to "step out of the way" and let the piece reveal itself as I paint. It never ceases to amaze and delight me.

Thereafter, your story is whispered. My paintings are a mirror, a reflection of our light and shadow, our human essence and our timeless divinity. ◀

*Publisher's note: It was a joy to improvise in collaboration with our cover artist, Autumn Skye Morrison. She encouraged us to blend two of her beautiful paintings in order to capture the dual themes of this month's edition: health and Earth Day, which, in reality are inseparable. We need both a healthy planet and a healthy culture to be truly healthy people. Celebrate the inspired work of this amazing local BC painter by viewing her dynamic body of work. Contact Autumn Skye Morrison via her website [www.autumnskyemorrison.com](http://www.autumnskyemorrison.com)*

### ...Tar Sands E from pg 26

Tar Sands in this reality. Greenpeace works on climate issues around the world, but in Canada, stopping the Tar Sands and building a truly green economy is the top priority. Greenpeace has launched a vocal and dramatic campaign to try to bring attention and action to a horror show that has been compared to Tolkien's Mordor.

In 2008, the Tar Sands produced 37.2 megatonnes of GHG emissions. That's roughly equivalent to the annual GHG emissions of nine million cars. The Tar Sands are Canada's fastest growing source of GHG emissions and the projections for future development are staggering. The Alberta government has given away thousands of leases for an area of land roughly the size of Scotland for mining Tar Sands deposits both by strip mining and by in situ operations. Think of the size of the city of Vancouver, multiply it by five times and you have an idea of the scale of the strip mining operations currently going on in Alberta. The total land area currently approved for strip mining is 12 times larger than the city of Vancouver. If all mining development continues

unabated, by 2020, the Tar Sands will produce over 100 megatonnes of GHG emissions annually, more than all the cars and trucks in Canada.

The amount of fresh water used in the Tar Sands is equally shocking. The Tar Sands currently produce more than a million barrels of oil a day. On average, for every barrel of oil produced, three barrels of fresh water are used. This has devastating consequences for the Athabasca river systems and for downstream First Nations communities.

A report released in December by the Mikisew Cree and the Fort Chipewyan First Nation, two First Nations downstream of the Tar Sands, shows that, at times, water levels are so low it renders over 80 percent of their traditional territory inaccessible for weeks in the spring and summer.

Much of the water taken from the river system ends up in one of many toxic tailings "ponds" associated with Tar Sands operations. These toxic lakes cover roughly 170 square kilometres of Alberta with wastewater that

has been used in the extraction process and is now contaminated with carcinogens and petrochemicals. Every day, because these lakes are not properly secured or monitored, an estimated 11 million litres of toxic tailings water leak into the groundwater or back into the Athabasca River. Downstream communities are experiencing rising health problems; there are fears about the drinking water and they have been warned not to eat fish – 80 percent of their traditional diet.

What is the world going to look like by 2020? Or in 30 or 40 years' time? The human race stands at a crossroads. The decisions we make now will have dramatic impacts on what our future holds.

If we, as a civilization, have any hope of solving the climate crisis, surely it starts with the Tar Sands. If we are going to rise to "the greatest humanitarian challenge" of our time, Canada must cease its blind defence of the Tar Sands and become part of the global solution. ◀

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